

The Kurds of Lebanon: Socioeconomic Mobility and Political Participation via Naturalization

Guita G. Hourani

November 2011

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC)
Notre Dame University-Louaizé (NDU), Lebanon

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The author and the study team that worked on this study have made every effort to ensure that the information contained in this report is reliable, but make no guarantee of accuracy or completeness and do not accept any liability for any inexactness.

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ABSTRACT

The author analyzes the strength of the association between citizenship acquisition/naturalization and socioeconomic mobility and political participation through Subjective Social Status (SSS) among 164 Kurds who were naturalized Lebanese by the Presidential Decree 5247/1994 of June 20, 1994. The author examined *intragenerational* socioeconomic mobility and political participation by comparing the immigrants' SSS at the time of naturalization (*i.e.* 1994) to their SSS 15 years after (*i.e.* 2010). The dependent variables were defined according to Subjective Social Status criteria. Data analysis was checked using the Cronbach alpha test, frequency distribution and percentages, as well as descriptive statistics that controlled for socio-demographic and socioeconomic categories, including education, discrimination, and political participation. Furthermore, the MacArthur 10-rung social status ladder was used to obtain self class identifications at both time intervals. Analysis suggests that relative mobility occurred among the population of this study in the last 15 years. The findings indicate that naturalization has positively impacted the socioeconomic mobility of a large segment of the surveyed naturalized Kurds. The findings also suggest that political participation, especially voting, although very high, is clientelist in its nature and that "the naturalized are not at all 'free' in their voting behavior, but are rather prisoners of the one thing that should have freed them-- their citizenship -- because many believe that they owe their citizenship to one politician or another" (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous). The study concludes that a) citizenship has had a generally positive impact on the Kurds surveyed, with the degree of improvement differing between one person and another according to inherited capital and individual life choices; b) upward income and job mobility were statistically significant; c) residence rate mobility was widespread; and d) self identification of social class showed upward mobility. In terms of political participation, the study concluded that a) there is a high voting turnout among this cohort, b) that voting patterns and self-descriptions of voting motivation display a high level of clientelism, and c) that there is a high level of dissatisfaction in the representation of the Kurds in the parliament and the municipal elections.

KEYWORDS

Lebanon, Kurds, Immigration, Naturalization, Citizenship, Nationality, Subjective Social Status Intragenerational, Socioeconomic Mobility, Political Participation, Social Status, Social Stratification, Ottoman, Turkey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an investigation of the affects of citizenship acquisition on the socioeconomic mobility and political participation of the Kurds in Lebanon who were naturalized under Presidential Decree No. 5247/1994, dated June 20 1994. The report is concerned with *intragenerational* mobility of the naturalized, using as a diagnostic tool a survey questionnaire of 164 naturalized Kurds in Beirut. A total of 10,000 Kurds, it is estimated, were naturalized in 1994, although there are no exact figures due to the fact that Lebanon has not carried out a census since 1932. The lack of official statistics means that we do not know with certainty the demographic breakdown of the Lebanese population either now or in 1994.

The data collected and analyzed in this report show that the naturalized Kurds have experienced a clear improvement in their socioeconomic situation and have robustly embraced the opportunity to vote in Lebanese elections, even though less than one percent claimed membership of Kurdish or Lebanese political parties. Between 1994 and 2010, we observe a distinct increase in the educational attainment of these naturalized Kurds, especially in the vocational/technical field. Their employment choices and career trajectories reflect improvements in professional and skill level. This is marked, as well, by the steady decrease in the number and frequency of irregular jobs as regular employment increases. Moreover, their real wages rose, their income from private businesses and assets considerably expanded, and their reliance on family aid decreased; at the same time, their dependence upon the assistance of political parties soared. The latter factor is conditioned by the affiliation of this group with the dominant Muslim Sunni *Al Mustaqbal* (the Future Movement) party, which operates a chain of welfare programs for its constituencies to provide services and aid, while in turn facilitating the party's political ambitions by serving as a vehicle for political mobilization during elections.

After naturalization, the Kurds' rate of home ownership improved dramatically. So did the number of those who held bank accounts.

The naturalized showed considerable subjective upward class mobility in the course of their 15 years as naturalized citizens. Respondents rated their current social class as significantly higher than their social class at the time of naturalization. The responses indicated that there was a substantial shift from the first three rungs to the 4^{th}, 5^{th} and 6^{th} rungs 15 years after naturalization, signifying that the respondents perceived themselves as getting closer to the status of "the people who are the best off -- those who have the most education and the most respected jobs". Our follow-up survey also reveals that some of the naturalized perceive their status as being above the 7^{th} and 8^{th} rung 15 years after naturalization.

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents expressed positive views about their children's future economic status now that they have acquired their citizenship.

Two significant endogenous factors might have affected the various degrees of socioeconomic mobility of the 1994 cohort of naturalized Kurds: a) over half were born in Lebanon, which would seem to imply a familiarity with the Lebanese system that may have given them a tacit advantage beyond their naturalized status; and b) they are concentrated in the capital of Lebanon, Beirut, and hence were beneficiaries of the reconstruction boom that occurred after the war. Furthermore, one of the advantages of being naturalized in Beirut is that the voter is automatically of value to the Beiruti Sunni political machine and can negotiate through relationships with the Sunni constituency for services and aid. Of course, exogenous factors – the business cycle, war, globalization, etc. – must have also impinged on their individual fate, as well as on the fate of all Lebanese.

Significantly, our survey shows that the group, which is identified by the Lebanese government and society simply as Kurds, is not a homogenous one in terms of its own self-identification. Within our cohort, there were two strong ethnic self-identity claims that occurred over and over: ethnic Kurds (Kurmanj) and Arabs (*Merdallis-Muhallamis*).[1] These self-identifying labels are a post-naturalization phenomenon, perhaps because the sub-ethnic identities would have muddied the process of negotiating as 'Kurds' for access to Lebanese citizenship. Paradoxically, the respondents are currently experiencing significant ethnic self-consciousness in regard to political representation. Our survey found that 92% of the respondents felt that, as 'Kurds', they were not represented in the Lebanese parliament. This sentiment was shared equally by those who self-identify as ethnic Kurds and those who self-identified as *Merdallis-Muhallamis*, despite the fact that the latter did not even consider themselves properly Kurds. This new form of ethnic-self-consciousness, and the widespread sense of a lack of political representation, may be an outcome of the fact of naturalization and the citizenship rights associated with it.

The research also showed that "the naturalized are not at all 'free' in their voting behavior, but are rather 'prisoners' of the one thing that should have freed them-- their citizenship (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011: 192) Because many believe that they owe their citizenship to one politician or other (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011: 198). The Kurds and other naturalized citizens

[1] *Merdalli* is a "general appellation to all the people who come from the Mardin area in Southeastern Turkey"- Dr. Shabo Talay of the Institut für Außereuropäische Sprachen und Kulturen, Lehrstuhl für Orientalische Philologie Friedrich Alexander at the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, telephone interview, March 3, 2011. Although *Merdalli* encompasses other than the *Muhallami* group, in this study we shall use *Merdalli-Muhallami* to indicate the people who do not identify as Kurds, but rather as *Merdalli* and *Muhallami* interchangeably. *Muhallamiyeh* "is a group of people living in an area between Mediat and Mardin in Southeast Turkey. They speak an Arabic dialect known as the *Muhallami*, which belongs to the so called *qultu* dialects. This group of dialects is spoken in Mesopotamia from Basra up to Eastern Turkey. These dialects are the oldest level of Arabic spoken in that area"- Dr. Shabo Talay, telephone interview, March 3, 2011. For further information, please consult Shabo Talay, *Arabic Dialects of Mesopotamia, in* Michael P. Streck and Stefan Weninger (Eds.), *Semitic Languages: An International Handbook on their Structure, their History and their Investigation.* Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (HSK), Berlin, de Gruyter 2011 (Forthcoming).

continue to rely heavily on political patrons who, in return for favors going back to the event of naturalization in the first place, pay them back at the ballot box. This has been the Kurd's situation in the parliamentary and the municipal elections since 1996. The political dissatisfaction of the Kurds in our sample point to either a dysfunction in the political machine or the electorate mobilization process that has not changed for the better, or a failure on the part of the Kurds to better situate themselves in the political game. Perhaps the truth is that both factors come into play, here.

The findings presented in this report support the notion that the naturalization of immigrants can play a significant role in improving socioeconomic mobility and political participation of the naturalized. Furthermore, it gives backing to the hypothesis that naturalization positively affects the quality of life of the naturalized themselves, *i.e.* aiding *intragenerational* mobility. Accordingly, these findings point to the advantages of reforming Lebanese citizenship laws to bring about better solutions to the problem of non-refugees who have been residents in the country since before its independence, suggesting that implementing appropriate socioeconomic and political integration policies to change the status of these persons from denizens to citizens has multiple beneficial effects on their quality of life.

SECTION I- THE KURDS IN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

1.1 Introduction

In order to understand how the migrants of a particular population into a foreign country may still feel identified by and bonded to their ethnicity, even in the face of pressures to assimilate in order to accrue socio-economic status and political rights, we must look at the context in which the migration from the country of origin occurred, as well as the history of the settlement in the host country.

In this case, we are dealing with the Kurds in Lebanon. The genesis of the Kurdish problem in the Middle East neither begins in Lebanon nor is confined to that country. The lack of a Kurdish nation has a historical and contemporary political importance for the region as a whole and for the nations within which the Kurds live; it has grown in importance since the end of the Cold War, as Kurdish nationalist factions began to demand recognition in the international community. These are especially pressing issues for the four countries which now encompass what is believed to be the ancient Kurdish homeland *i.e.*, the countries of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, which, except for Iran, were largely carved out of the imperium of Ottoman Turkey after World War I. The first wave of Lebanese Kurds came from Turkey, while the second wave came from the Syria. Although one can find ample studies on the Kurds in general, few studies have explored the migration of the Kurds to Lebanon in particular.[2]

We have based our identification of the Kurds as an ethnic group on our general sense of an *ethnos*, or people, which is defined by Hutchinson and Smith's as "a named population with myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with a homeland and a sense of solidarity among at least some of its members" (Hutchinson and Smith 1996: 6). The Kurdish people are one of many ethnic groups in the Middle East, as are the Armenians, Circassians, Jews, Druze, Arameans/Syriacs, Alawites and others. The Kurds differ from each of these ethnic groups in terms of their language, homeland, history, and religious denomination (Harik 1972: 306). They are the fourth major population in the Middle East, along with the Arabs, the Turks, and the Persians. Their ancient settlements were located between two powerful empires -- the Greek-Hellenic to the west and Persian to the east -- and distributed over northern Iraq, northwest Iran, and southeast Turkey.

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[2] The majority of Kurds in Lebanon hail from Turkey or Syria. They are for all purposes called Kurds in Lebanon and as such they were naturalized particularly in 1994. However, our field work revealed that many of the so called Kurds do not consider themselves ethnically as such. Therefore, it is indispensable to define at the outset of this work the group I am referring to as the Kurds of Lebanon. Because the cohort I am following naturalized in Lebanon under the label "Naturalization Under Review" were in their absolute majority Kurds (Official Gazette 1994: 1-1280), I shall follow in the footsteps of Bruinessen, who faced the same dilemma in his work and chose to use a rather broad definition of this group (van Bruinessen 2000: 1). Hence, the Kurds in this report include all native speakers of the North Kurmanji dialect and the South Kurmanji or Soranî, those who call themselves *Merdallis*, as well as those who consider themselves Arabs who migrated to Lebanon from Mardin and Tur Abdin and their surrounding areas in Turkey.

Modern Kurdish nationalism began in the period of crisis preceding the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, starting with the suspension of the constitution in 1878. Restive ethnic groups within the empire viewed the Ottoman power's acceptance of the European financial control bailout and its loss of territories (Tunisia to the French, Egypt to the British, Bosnia to the Austrians, Libya to the Italians, and the eastern part of Anatolia to the Russians) as so many signs of weakness, catalyzing long suppressed nationalist feelings.

The decision of Sultan Abdul Hamid II to suspend the constitution and the parliament in 1878 ignited the flame of what came to be called the Young Turk movement of 1908. This revolution started with the aim of restoring the parliament; however, it was not too long after that that the overzealous nationalism of its members triggered assaults on the minorities of the land of today's Turkey. The issue of the status of non-Muslim and minority communities were used as a weapon against the Ottomans by the European powers, who devoted key sections of the Paris Treaty of 1856, the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 and the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 to protecting these minorities within the Ottoman state (Toktas 2005: 408). The Treaty of Sèvres, which preceded the Treaty of Lausanne, "envisaged interim autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas of Turkey with a view to full independence" (McDowall 1992: 17).

The aggressive nationalism of the Young Turk agenda affected many of the minorities that had formerly coexisted in Ottoman Turkey. Often, they were forced directly or indirectly to leave their land. Kurds, Greeks,[3] Armenians,[4] Arameans/Syriacs,[5] Jews and Circassians[6], and Laz[7] were all affected by the policy of creating a state with an identity that was unequivocally Turkish, a state where there was no officially recognized space for those who claimed non-Turkish identity (McDowall 1992: 1). However, "the situation was not that uncomplicated; in fact it was extremely complex and vertically and laterally multipart with internal enmity on the imperial level, rivalries on the tribal and minority levels, interferences and conflicting interests on the international level of the super powers of the era (e.g. the Russians, the French, the British, among others). The whole region and particularly Anatolia was witnessing international power struggle to control this region and internal polarization whereby minorities were intermittently positioning themselves in an incessantly changing political environment. These minorities were at the same time players and pawns" (Deniz Gökalp 2011).[8]

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[3] For further information, see Carroll Brown and Theodore Ion, *Persecutions of the Greeks in Turkey since the Beginning of the European War,* American-Hellenic Society, New York: Oxford University Press American Branch, 1918.
[4] For further information, see Roderic H. Davison, Armenian Crisis, 1912-1914, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Apr., 1948), pp. 481-505;
[5] For further information, see Jenny Thomsen, *The Assyrians/Syriacs of Turkey: A forgotten People,* School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Human rights 61-90, Malmô University, Fall 2007.
[6] For further information, see A. a. Pallis, the Population of Turkey in 1935, *the Geographical Journal,* vol. 91, No. 5, May 1938, pp. 439-445.
[7] For further information, see Zeki Sarigil, Comparative Ethno-nationalism: The Laz vs. Kurds, APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper, 2009.
[8] This quote is from an email exchange received on May 18, 2011 from Dr. Deniz Gökalp author of a Ph.D. thesis entitled *Beyond Ethnopolitical Contention: The State, Citizenship and Violence in the 'New' Kurdish Question in Turkey*,

Between 1915 and 1925, Anatolia witnessed an extensive outflow of minority groups and an inflow of Muslims from the Balkan states. The first major forced migration began in 1915, when the Ottoman government decided to deport an estimated two million Armenians from their historic land in Eastern Anatolia, a plan that ended in the genocide of the Armenian people. The second large compulsory migration was that of two million Greeks, whose expulsion from Anatolia was facilitated by a special accord agreed upon between the new Turkish Republic and Greece after the Greek army was decisively defeated in its irredentist move against Atatürk's Turkey (Metz 1995). The numbers in these ethnic groups in Anatolia continued to "diminish as many have left the country because of attacks and persecutions targeted at them since the 1920s and after the establishment of the Turkish Republic" (Sirkeci 2006: 51). These events did not happen simply because the Armenians, the Greeks and the Kurds were minorities, since they had coexisted with the Turks under the Ottomans, but rather because the Turkish government was suspicious of their aspirations for national autonomy and their rejection of the Turkification policy.

The geographic location of the Kurds during this period, according to Sykes, was the area bounded by Lake Van and the Armenian table land, on the west by the Tigris, and on the south by the plains of Iraq. The composition of Kurdish society was divided among large and small size tribes. The Kurds were initially mountain people, mainly tribesmen who were shepherds and small farmers (Harik 1972: 307). Their communities were formed of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes; however, in the twentieth century, the many Kurds who emigrated to the cities gradually lost their tribal identity (McDowall 1992: 12).

Thus, historically, Kurdish society was structured around a nucleus of tribes; on the one hand this meant that Kurdish local communities were bound together by ties of kinship and stabilized under a traditional tribal leader, but on the other, it also obstructed the creation of integral Kurdish national unity (Nisan 2002: 34). The tribal system of blood ties was based on the mostly agricultural exploitation of exclusive tribal land, which functioned well in an agrarian society where land exchange was at a minimum and agricultural surpluses provided outside money (Harik 1972: 307). The strong tribal knit, along with a shared memory of their mountain and nomadic past, their parochial awareness of the Kurdish homeland, and their distinct social practices, shaped both their survival in the pre-modern era and their problematic political status in the modern era (Nisan 1991: 28). For fear of undermining their own position and power, the traditional leaders ruled the community in a rigid and hierarchical manner that made it easy for the Turkish government to co-opt them in ruling the Kurds, while delaying the kind of emergence of a national consciousness that is a pre-condition for the emancipation of the any ethnic group bent on achieving a nation state (McDowall 1992: 16).

The autonomy of the tribes under local *emir* rulers was established by the Ottoman Empire, who relied on the fact that emirs "upheld Ottoman law, paid the taxes, did not conspire with Iran or trespass into others' territories". The emirs were supported by troops stationed in the region when

necessary (van Bruinessen 1992: 42). These emirs or chieftains cooperated with the central government in exchange for the government's non-interference in their traditional privileges (van Bruinessen 1992: 42).

Kurdish society in the rural areas was a stratified, heterogeneous, tribal society, where tribal elites dominated settled rudimentary peasants and the semi-nomadic and sedentary tribes (Natali 2005: 74; van Bruinessen 1992: 34). Traditionally "the Kurds were largely organized into a rough hierarchy of sub-tribes, tribes and tribal confederations. Loyalties were not immutable, and a strong and determined leader of one tribe might well be able to acquire a sufficient following and perhaps territory to throw off previous loyalties and realign himself with another federation or group, or even with the government" (McDowall 1992: 12). Consequently, internal rivalries and tribal frictions, along with the exploitative relationships between the dominant and the subject strata created protracted divisions in the Kurdish societies (van Bruinessen 1992: 34). The governance of the tribes adhered to "feudal" norms whereby the *aghas or aghawat* or the governing families formed a distinct class or caste that had access to modern education and expanded economic opportunities, rarely intermarrying with common tribesman (van Bruinessen 1992: 41). In addition to the internal rivalries, external interference played a leading role in exerting pressure on all tribes by a strategy of divide and conquer, supporting one tribe against the other or one chief against the other, which divided Kurdish societies and weakened them in the face of Turkish nationalist ambitions. Surviving as a clan was a priority and as such tribal leaders were willing, if properly rewarded, to act against another neighboring tribe (McDowall 1992: 12).

This brief sketch of Kurdish society is meant to highlight the complex vertical social and political stratification which helped shape endogenous social forces and which thus confronted exogenous actors in the historical trajectory of Kurdish relations with non-Kurds. In addition, the intricacies of these ethnic, religious and linguistic differences greatly blurred exact ethnic divisions. Notwithstanding the dominance of pre-modern kinship-based social and political norms, and despite the fact that the Kurds were divided by religious denomination and tribe, there was a core Kurdish identity that survived as a distinct group linguistically, culturally, and -- to an extent -- territorially. However, for most of the modern era, these conflicting interests prevented the Kurdish core from achieving any autonomous political status. Collective efforts to resist the hegemony of other national forces were undermined by divisions and fragmentation among the Kurds (van Bruinessen 1992: 34).

It was in this environment that Atatürk's chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Izzettin Çalışlar wrote in his diary on May 2, 1916 the following observation about the Kurds of Diyarbakir: "The enemy is pressing hard against their land. Yet most of them are not rushing to defend it. They will have nothing to do with military service. They do not know Turkish. They do not understand what government means. In brief, these are places which have not yet been conquered. Yet one could

make good use of these people; they obey their tribal leaders and sheikhs, who are very influential in these parts" (Mango 1999: 2).

1.2 Nationalization

The Young Turks movement began in 1889 as a league of various reform groups consisting of intellectuals, dissidents in exile, and officers in the army, especially those based at the headquarters of the Third Army Corps in Salonika, which notably included Mustafa Kemal, who is better known to history through the name he took later, Atatürk. Although inspired by the spirit of nationalism that was sweeping through Europe (which had already cost the Empire most of its Balkan provinces), the movement promoted a vision of a democratic multi-national state. In 1906, various Young Turk organizations joined forces and formed the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which would govern the Empire from 1908 until 1918. The Young Turk's enthusiasm was fueled by intellectuals such as Namik Kemal, known as the Poet of Liberty, who wrote in 1878: "while we must try to annihilate all languages in our country except Turkish, shall we give Albanians, Lazes and Kurds a spiritual weapon by adopting their own characters?..." Language "may be the firmest barrier -- perhaps firmer than religion -- against national unity" (Mango 1999: 4).

The movement wanted to modernize and democratize on the one hand while on the other it wanted to preserve what was left of the empire; this meant crushing any attempt at minority independence for the sake of the unity of what was left of the land of the Ottoman Empire. It was not long before the leadership abandoned decentralization as it feared aggravating the forces of disintegration. In fact, the periphery of the Empire continued to disintegrate under pressure from local revolutions, egged on by various imperial powers, who had ambitions in the region. For this reason, the Young Turks made the disastrous decision to ally with the Germans in the hope that this tactic would preserve the empire. In the event, the Allied victory ushered in the end of the Young Turks' own power. However, not all was lost, for during this short period they succeeded in laying down the basis in Asia Minor of the new nation-state of Turkey, which was subsequently galvanized into being under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Following World War I and the defeat of the Greek forces that invaded Asia Minor, hoping to carve up the nascent Turkish state, Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the revolutionary movement, succeeded in 1923 in establishing the State of Turkey and as such he was given the surname of Atatürk (Father of the Turks) by the Parliament. From 1923 to 1945, Turkey was governed by the Republican People's Party (RPP). This period was known as the "Single-Party Period", when "its policies for building a Turkish nation-state and creating a Turkish citizenry were characterized largely by the homogenization of society under the term "Turk" (Toktas 2005: 420). In the wake of the resurgence of Turkish nationalism, this period was generally marked by aggression against non-Muslim and non-Turkish groups.

1.3 The Kurds under Atatürk

The national revolution for Independence, which had initially promised constitutional guarantees of autonomy, soon disappointed those who envisioned an independent or semi-independent Kurdistan. The entire population within the official borders of Turkey was labeled "Turkish citizens", regardless of their ethnic and religious origins, on the republican model of France. Thus, legally, every person in the Republic was classed as "a Turk" regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or religion. Accordingly, the Republic of Turkey did not officially recognize any ethnic group as 'minority'; such status was accorded only to non-Muslim citizens. Those Armenians who remained in Anatolia were now considered a minority group, but they were also Turkish citizens. Kurds, on the other hand, were treated simply as Turkish citizens, with no special legal ethnic status. The Kurds of Turkey[9] were accepted as equal citizens under law, under which rubric they were aggressively assimilated. Since Kurdish identity was (and is) not officially recognized, Kurdish language and culture were not part of the official educational system, for instance. In other words, the Kurds were always "potential or would-be" Turks with full citizenship rights as long as they embraced their imposed "Turkishness"; in that respect, Turkish citizenship regime has been ironically inclusive rather than exclusive (Yegen 2004: 51-66).

Syria, Iran and Iraq modeled their own state-building on the Turkish experience, as it seemed, in the 1920s, to be a uniquely Middle Eastern path to modernization. All four countries adopted national ideologies that were based on the dominant identity and culture and aggressively excluded any special status for the identity and culture of minority groups. In response, a more nationalistically minded party within these ethnic groups developed a myriad of local oppositional identities; such strategies, however, were often opposed in turn by assimilationists and traditional leaders within these groups, who saw more opportunity in pursuing assimilationist projects (Nugent 1994: 333). Thus, a system of perverse incentives polarized the question of ethnic identity: the denial of the identities of these ethnic groups in the name of national sovereignty came to heighten the self-awareness of these groups, which included not only the Kurds but other groups as well.

The Kurds of Turkey revolted many times against the assimilation process, triggering several expeditions against them in Turkey. One of the major revolts occurred under the leadership of Sheikh Sait, who rallied thousands of Kurds around him against the newly established Ankara government of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The rebellion was the result of an "alliance of Kurdish intellectuals, officers, civil servants, and clergy assumed control of a part of the eastern provinces and marched on Diyarbakir city without success" (Bozarslan 1988). The rebels were subject to the brutal tactics adopted by the Turkish military, who used scorched earth tactics and aerial bombing to crush the rebellion. In the event, Sheikh Said was arrested and hanged on 29 June 1925 with 46 of his supporters and relatives, including his son (Olson 1989).

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[9] Gunter estimates the size of Kurdish population in Turkey to be between 12 and 15 million, around 18-23% of the total population: Gunter, M.M. (2008), *The Kurds Ascending – The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.2.

Historians are not in agreement over whether Sheikh Sait's rebellion was more of a reaction to Atatürk's secular reforms, which undermined the Ottoman era power of the sheikhs and tribal leaders, or whether it was a truly nationalist rebellion; others have pointed to its instigation by the British, who had interest in the oil deposits of Mosul (Olson and Tucker, 1978: 196). No matter what the reasons were for the revolt, the intense ethnic violence pushed both combatant and non-combatant Kurds to flee the violence and destitution. The success of the Turkish state's policy of coercion led to a policy of violently suppressing the slightest hint of Kurdish rebellion. When the state decided to re-organize the Dersim region of Turkey under the new name Tunceli, it amassed troops and attacked recalcitrant Kurds in the spring of 1938. The British Consul in Trebizond reported to the Foreign Office in London on 27 September 1938 that, "Thousands of Kurds, including women and children, were slain; others mostly children, were thrown into the Euphrates; while thousands of others in less hostile areas, who had first been deprived of their cattle and other belongings, were deported to *vilayets* (provinces) in Center Anatolia…" (van Bruinessen 1994: 141). The brutality of the expedition was not provoked by a domestic uprising, but rather seems to have been the result of a policy of pre-emptive intimidation meant to violently curtail any form of Kurdish identity (Van Bruinessen 1994: 144-145).[10]

These events profoundly destabilized the old order of Kurdish society. The long period of the Caliphate and the Sultanate had ill prepared the Kurds to build a nationalist program. The Kurdish elite had to learn to deal with a modern-type scenario with a whole new set of actors, including the British protectorate in Iraq and the new nationalist Middle Eastern states. Despite the fact that the Kurds had political representation during the multi-party period and some portion of the population accepted the legitimacy of Turkey, others continued to aspire for more autonomy. In any case, the turn of events mentioned above caused an internal exodus to the cities and an external exodus from southeast Turkey to other countries, including Lebanon.

1.4 Who are the Kurds?

Our survey above dealt with the political formation of the Kurdish question. However, to understand that question, one must have a larger historical and anthropological sense of the Kurdish people.

The genesis of the Kurdish people is beyond the scope of this paper.[11] However, it suffices to say that the Kurds are considered an "amalgam of Iranian and iranicized tribes, some of which may have been indigenous 'Kardu', but many of which were of Semitic or other ethnic origin" (McDowall 1992: 11). Certain basis facts of Kurdish demography are still uncertain. For instance, it is hard to determine the size of the Kurdish population, given the controversial political meaning that would

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[10] See also David McDowall, A modern history of the Kurds, 2000: 207-210.

[11] For further information, see Mehrdad R. Izady, Exploring Kurdish Origins, Harvard University, a lecture given on March 10, 1993 and published in *The Kurdish Life*, Number 7, Summer 1993.

attach to any objective census in the countries where most of the Kurds reside; *i.e.* Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

Although the Kurds of Turkey were certainly aware of belonging to an ethnic group that was distinct from the Persians, the Turks, the Jews, the Arabs, and the Arameans/Syriacs, there is no "unanimity among them as to what constitutes this ethnic identity and what the boundaries of their ethnic group are" (van Bruinessen 2000: 1). This awareness of identity, however, which is mostly evident among the educated class, and to a much lower degree among the peasantry and working class, is based on two elements: language and religion.

1.5 Religious and Linguistic Diversity

The majority of the Kurds are followers of the Shafi'i School[12] of Sunni Islam. However, one can find Shiite Muslim, Alevi, Christian, Jewish, Yazidi, Ahl-i-Haqq, Qizillbash, and Babi Kurds. There are also various sub-ethnic groups within the Kurds such as the Zaza, the Ahl-e haqq, and the Faili. The language, Kurmanji, is divided into North Kurmanji or Bahdinani, which is spoken in Iraq; Shikaki, which is spoken in Iran and is widely spoken among the Kurds of Turkey, Iran and Iraq; and South Kurmanji or Soranî which is spoken in southern Kurdistan. Major subdialects of South Kurmanji are Mukri, Ardalani, Garmiyani, Khushnow, Pizhdar, Warmawa, Kirmanshahi, and Arbili. There are other related languages such as Zaza, which is spoken in Diyarbakir, and Gurani, which is rooted in various parts of Kurdistan. The Zazas and the Guranis consider themselves Kurds, and are so deemed by others.

It is a common belief that the "Kurdish language is both proof and symbol of the separate identity of the Kurds" (Kreyenbroek 1992: 69); yet it must be remembered that "neither do all Kurds adhere to the same religion, nor do they speak the same language" (van Bruinessen 1992: 34). In fact "the spoken Kurdish shows, in vocabulary and even in syntax, a strong influence of the dominant official language," e.g. Turkish, Farsi, Arabic, etc. (van Bruinessen 1992: 35).

Emulating Ataturk's Latinization of the Turkish language, Jeladet Bedir Khan, an exiled nationalist political leader, Latinized the Kurdish language *Kurmanji* in the nineteen-thirties and, along with other Kurdish intellectuals and French *Kurdologues*, pioneered the modern Kurdish cultural renaissance. The movement revived the mythologies, proverbs, and poetries of the Kurds, while publicizing, mainly in French, Kurdish culture to the West.

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[12] The Shafi'i School is one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence within the Sunni branch of Islam. It was named after Imām ash-Shafi'i. This school stipulates that doctrinal authority in Islam must be accorded to four sources of jurisprudence: the Quran, the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad, consensus, and analogy. The other three schools of Islamic law are Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali.

SECTION II- THE KURDS OF LEBANON

2.1 Introduction

In Section II, we presented an overview of the history of the Kurds, emphasizing the major events within the geographic extent of 'Kurdistan' which propelled major migrations from out of areas in which Kurds found themselves oppressed. In the same section, we presented some related aspects of the Turkification policy of the Turkish government in the first half of the 20th century, which served as a model of modernization and nation-building for other states in the region. The Kemalist government administered the country as part of its 'population engineering' in its efforts to create a modern, secular, centralized nation-state. We have also touched on the deportation and displacement of the Kurds from their homeland in the late Ottoman and the early Republican era. Finally, we gave a very concise summary of the history and ethnography of the Kurds, emphasizing their religion and language.

In this section, we shall present the push- and pull- factors that affected the Kurds' migration and settlement in Lebanon and their socio-economic and political conditions upon their arrival and as they settled in the country of the Cedars. First, we shall present to a brief survey of Lebanese society and the nation into which the migrants settled.

Lebanon is a republic of 10,452 square kilometers located on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Lebanon was under the Ottoman rule until the end of World War I, when, following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, it was put under a League of Nations mandate that gave political control of the territory to France. Lebanon's constitution was drawn up in 1926 and was modeled after the constitution of the French Third Republic. Lebanon gained its independence in 1943 and an unwritten agreement described as the "National Pact" allocated political power and public offices to the various religious sects on an essentially confessional basis. This system was amended in the Taëf Agreement following the ending of the Civil War I 1989, but the sectarian allocation of power and public offices still remained the basis for the Lebanese status quo.[13]

Lebanon is a parliamentary democracy in which the citizens directly elect the 128 deputies in Parliament every four years and the parliament, in turn, elects the President of the Republic every six years. The 128 seats are divided equally between Christians and Muslims and within these two religions among their respective sects.[14] Each of Lebanon's 26 geographical *Qaza* 'has pre-

[13] See Mona Yacoubian, Lebanon's Unstable Equilibrium, United States Institute Of Peace, USIPeace Briefing, November 2009.

[14] Of 128 parliamentary seats, 64 seats are allotted for the Christian community as follows: 34 seats for the Maronites, 14 for the Greek Orthodox, 8 for the Greek Catholic, 5 for the Armenian Orthodox, one for the Armenian Catholic, one for the Evangelicals, and one for the minorities. The 64 seats for the Muslim community are distributed as follows: 27 seats for the Sunnis, 27 for the Shiites, 8 for the Druze, and 2 for the Alawites.

established quotas for candidates from different sects. Voters cast ballots for candidates from all sects -- not just from their own sect -- and the candidates with the highest number of votes win the seats allotted to their respective sects" (Cammett 2009: n. p.).

The Constitution prescribes, as well, the denomination to be held by each of the three main officers of the state: the President must be a Maronite Christian, the Speaker of the Parliament a Shiite, and the Prime Minister a Sunni. Demographically, Lebanon is composed of over 18 ethnic and religious groups that are officially recognized. Since for political reasons Lebanon has not officially had a national census since 1932, the number and composition of the population is not fully known. Currently the resident population of Lebanon is estimated to be four million, the majority of which are Shiite and Sunni Muslim and Christians. The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and the freedom to practice all religious rites. This estimated population includes around 400,000 Palestinian refugees who are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

Arabic is the predominant language, Syriac, Armenian, Kurdish, Turkish, and Chaldean languages, are also spoken by the diverse ethno-religious communities of the country.

The service sector accounts for over 70% of Lebanon's GDP; historically, Lebanon has been one of the great merchant and financial centers of the Middle East. Agriculture, small industry, tourism, and banking make up the bulk of endogenously created Lebanon's wealth. However, Lebanon is also heavily reliant on its diaspora remittances that, since the end of the Civil War in the 1989, make up between 23-25% of the GDP.

Political instability and violence have plagued Lebanon since the beginning of the 20th century. The violence is due in part to internally driven conflicts between diverse ethnic and religious groups, and in part to spillovers from the inter-state conflicts of its neighbors. This has led to chronic outbursts of violence that have laid waste to the country's physical infrastructure, generated significant casualties, deteriorated its business environment, and caused both significant internal displacement and extensive emigration.

However, even under these disadvantages, the Lebanese economy has displayed remarkable resilience due to the flexibility of its economic structure, made up almost exclusively of small and medium-sized companies, the strong entrepreneurial spirit of its population, the reputation of its financial and banking sector (which is especially attractive to the economies of the oil-rich Middle Eastern states), and the escape hatch provided by a culture of migration that has established an international informal network of expatriate Lebanese. The latter contribute to Lebanon through sizeable remittances and provide aid to Lebanese migrants in a number of different host countries.

2.2 The Kurds and Lebanon

A brief literature review reveals that the Kurds had some kind of presence in the territory that is now Lebanon as far back as the eleventh century. The Šibl al-dawla, the then Mirdasid ruler of Aleppo (1029-1041 A.D.), imported loyal Muslim tribes, among whom were Kurds, and settled them on the plains of 'Akkar and Buqay'a in the northern part of Lebanon (Salibi 1973: 27). The Kurds were settled in the historic Crusader fortress Crac des Chevaliers[15] in Tripoli, which from that fact became known as *Hosn al-Akrad* (Fortress of the Kurds). Later on, the fortress and all of Tripoli fell into the hands of the Crusaders again, and the Kurds, with the rest of the population, were either dispersed or subdued. After the Mamluks re-conquered Tripoli from the Crusaders in the 13th century, "fresh colonies of Kurdish and Turcoman tribesmen were established in various parts of the Lebanon region and elsewhere to control the mountain hinterland and guard the passages to the interior". (Salibi 1973: 27) The Kurds "acquired a reputation for military prowess… evolving a tradition of military service to the regimes in power" (McDowall 1992: 11). The Kurdish presence in Tripoli and part of the Syrian mountains and coastal region continues to be evident to these early settlements (Izady 1992: 95). But the Kurdish presence is more than a historic curiosity: research seems to show that the Kurds were much more of a presence in Lebanon than simply as a mercenary military force: many elite Lebanese families are of Kurdish origin, including the Jumblats and the 'Imads in the Mount Lebanon, the Merabi and the Abbouds in the 'Akkar in the North and the Fadels in the South (Mawsili 1995: 494).

Even so, Lebanon was not a major staging area for any of the Kurdish tribes we have discussed above. Our interest in the Kurdish community of modern time starts with the first wave of migrants in the first half of the 20th century,[16] which was followed by a second wave in the second half of the century that took refuge in the country for the same reason, namely persecution in their native lands.[17] Most of the Kurds who came to Lebanon during the first wave originated from the Mardin[18] and the Tur Abdin[19] areas in Turkey. Their migratory route was by way of Syria; some stopped for a time in Syria before moving later to Lebanon (McDowall 2004: 485). Those who come in the second wave were Syrian Kurds, who were stripped of their Syrian citizenship by the Syrian regime in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

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[15] The fortress is known as Crac des Chevaliers in connection with the Knights Hospitallers who held the fortress in Crusader time.

[16] For further information see Jean-David Mizrahi, (2003) *Genèse de l'Etat mandataire. Service des Renseignements et bandes armées en Syrie et au Liban dans les années 1920*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne. Méouchy, Nadine (2002) *France et Liban 1918-1946. Les ambiguïtés et les dynamiques de la relation mandataire*, Damas, Institut Français d'Etudes Arabes de Damas.

[17] For further information see Jordi Tejel, *Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society,* Translated from the French by Emily Welle and Jane Welle, London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

[18] Mardin is a city in southeastern Turkey. The capital of Mardin Province, it is known for its architecture and monasteries, and for its strategic location on a mountain overlooking the plains of Northern Syria.

[19] Tur 'Abdin is a hilly region of south-east Turkey incorporating the eastern half of Mardin Province, and Sirnak Province west of the Tigris, on the border with Syria. Tur 'Abdin used to be the monastic and cultural heartland of the Syriac Orthodox Christians, who still retain ties to the region. The inhabitants traditionally speak an Aramaic dialect recently called Turoyo but originally called "Surayt" in their mother tongue.

In his article "Labour Migration and Economic Conditions in Nineteenth-Century Anatolia," Christopher Clay pointed out that the advances in the transportation of the time generated unexpected impacts on labor movement both inside the Ottoman Empire and outside it. He also addressed the socioeconomic situation of Anatolia which encompassed Mardin and Tur Abdin, which at the time was deteriorating; the demand for "goods marketed locally (including those of the livestock products of the pastoral Kurds) [was] forced downwards." In response to these economic pressures, unemployment increased, as did rural-urban migration to "'local metropolis which was able to absorb a majority of those who had to, or wished to, leave their villages." (Clay 1998: 6) Kurds and Lazes comprised the bulk of the migrant labor force during the Ottoman era before the end of the 1850s. In a social pattern that continues to this day, much of the money they earned was remitted home in one way or another. Even those on the margins of the economy remitted money home: "Hamlin's Kurds, dressed as beggars so as to avoid unwelcome attention, wore concealed leather girdles in which to hide the gold coins they were taking home" (Clay 1998: 12, 16). Clay's research reveals the fact that labor migration was a phenomenon among the Kurds even prior to the beginning of the 20th century, and that we must date the onset of urbanization backwards from the era of modernization to the Ottoman era, when there was visibly a pattern of rural-urban migration to 'local' or close metropolises (Aleppo, Diyarbakir, Damascus, Beirut, Istanbul, Izmir, etc.) within the empire.

Initially, the motive for Kurdish out-migration was economic: Kurds sought to exploit the trades they knew best – as agricultural workers during the spring plowing time and the summer harvesting period, as dock laborers, office caretakers, and custodian of city houses and gardens -- in non-Kurdish areas on a permanent or semi-permanent or on a seasonal basis. According to Clay, laborers were highly sensitive to pay differentials and local demands for labor.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Lebanon was certainly one of the regions favored by migratory Kurdish laborers on the lookout for work. The first were members of the Omeran tribe, originating from Mardin, whose movement back and forth over departmental boundaries was facilitated by the absence of legally imposed barriers under the Ottoman rule (Tejel 2007: 42). Although economic motives played a major role in promoting the displacement of the Kurdish labor force, it should be remembered that the surface stability of Ottoman rule lay over a deeper level of social conflict. Some of the Omrans who had family members in Lebanon moved following intra-tribal rivalry (Tejel 2007, 42). Later, as the Turkish national project crystallized under Ataturk, other waves arrived in Lebanon from Turkey as a consequence to Sheikh Said's Rebellion.

Tejel's research in the Centre des Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (CADN) in France reveals that the number of Kurds in Beirut in 1927 was about 300 and rose in 1936 to 1500 and in 1944 to 7000 strong (Tejel 2007: 42). The rise in the number of Kurds between 1927 and 1936 may be due to push factors, mainly the intensification of the Turkish Kemalist population strategy that was focusing in 1931 to 1934 on implementing the government's "Settlement Law" policy through the

mass deportation and re-implantation of non-Turkish people, especially Kurds, who "were the object of large-scale, broad-brush social engineering" (Üngör 2008: n. p.) as they were displaced into zones in the Eastern provinces. The pull factor for some was certainly Beirut's economy, one of the most dynamic in the Levant in 1930s, offering jobs and opportunities.

That economic revival came on the heels of the devastation that accompanied the warfare in WWI, and the epidemics, and the famine that reaped half of the Lebanese population. In the 1920s, Lebanon began quickly to recover due to the remittances and aid sent by Lebanese emigrants to assist their families and help in the recovery of the country from the USA, Canada, Australia, Latin America and Africa. Another factor in the quick recovery was the French Mandatory power which took power over Lebanon and implemented policies of investment in infrastructure and creating an attractive environment for commerce, particularly in Beirut.

Beirut had become an important metropolis between 1860 and 1920. The city "was progressively integrated in the new circuits of World economy" (Barakat 2004: 486). The late development and expansion of the port of Beirut made it the main outlet for exporting silk to France and, as importantly, the major transit center for Middle East trade. During this period the city was also rapidly modernizing, with the reconstruction of the road system, railway and tramway tracks being laid down, modern telecommunications (telegraph and telephone) capabilities being built, and street lights installed. The construction and improvement in the city, in tandem with the economic activity, conditioned the urban pattern of the French mandate period, when "the city … spread beyond the municipal boundaries and absorbed the nearby villages of the plains and hills surrounding the town into suburban nuclei" (Nasr and Verdeil 2008: 1117). The vibrant city acted as a magnet attracting foreign laborers, entrepreneurs and contractors in search of investment opportunities and contracts, as well as diplomats and government officials, stationed there by the state. Travelers were attracted by the city's reputation, laying the foundation of what later became a considerable tourist industry. Finally, a Beirut based entertainment industry arose that loomed across the entire Middle Eastern landscape, as music, film, theater and the print media took advantage of Beirut's strategic situation, special relationship to France, and more relaxed atmosphere.

The French government poured money into creating an urban space in Beirut that would be recognizably European, building squares such as the Place de l'Etoile and streets such as General Allenby, and Marechal Foch, and turning old *khans*[20] into theaters and cinemas (Barakat 2004: 488).[21]

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[20] Khan, "type of inn once found in the Middle East and parts of North Africa and Central Asia that effectively functioned as a trading centre and hostel. A square courtyard was surrounded by rows of connected lodging rooms, usually on two levels and arcaded. Although some stable space was provided, the khan was intended primarily for people, providing food as well as shelter for travelers and traders…" Khan, *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, 2010, [http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/316248/khan]

[21] The French invested approximately 822 million francs during the course of the Mandate period in banks, reconstructing the port, electric power and other infrastructural facilities; for details see Carolyn Gates, *The Merchant Republic: Rise of an Open Economy,* Oxford, London and New York: Center For Lebanese Studies with I. B. Tauris

Furthermore, the Mandate policy of encouraging Beirut's financial services sector created a multiplier effect that spilled over into other service industries, which "attracted not only the rural population of the interior [of Lebanon] but also the ethnic refugees such as the Syriacs, Kurds, Melkites, victims of the political ambiguities of the mandatory countries" (Barakat 2004: 488). It was a very favorable opportunity for those who could amass the capital to start stores, artisanal ateliers, restaurants, and other small businesses in the city and its suburbs.

One of the factors that attracted some Kurds to Beirut was the founding of the political party *Khoyboun* in 1927. This was the political articulation of a nationalism that found other representatives among Kurdish intellectuals and elites, as, for instance, Emir Kamuran Bedir Khan, and his brother, Jeladet, both lawyers, who were exiled following the Kemalist rise to power in Turkey. The two were part of a network of exiles who tried to raise the Kurdish ethnic consciousness through the instrument of culture. In this they found encouragement among the French authorities, who were no friends of the Turkish government. This was the seed time for the study of Kurdish culture by the founding generation of *Kurdologue* specialists, who included such figures as Pierre Rondot, Roger Lescot, and Father Thomas Bois. Jordi Tejel has made a study that shows the connection between French 'kurdologues' (Roger Lescot and Pierre Rondot) and Kurdish nationalists in Syria and Lebanon under the French Mandate. It was through the works of these 'kurdologues' that Kurdish nationalists began to imagine their commonality and ethnicity in a more concrete way, defining a specific Kurdish identity that was then appropriated and spread by the Kurdish nationalist elites (Tejel 2006). The Bedir Khans and their colleagues constructed the Kurdish *ethnie* around the narrative of an ancient ethnic unity and used both history and landscape myths and symbols as essential vehicles to evoke a Kurdish national identity (Smith 1988: 200).

This spate of activities in Lebanon (and in Syria) was partially responsible for attracting more Kurds to these two areas. As the Kurdish exile community increased, under the patronage of the French, the Kurdish cultural image found outlet in "writing, publishing, and broadcasting in Kurdish" in Lebanon and Syria (Hassanpour et al. 1996: 370). The cultural renaissance in turn was fed by all the factors that brought more Kurds to Beirut, from family reunification and chain migration to fleeing oppression. Information about the advantageous Kurdish situation traveled back to Turkey along with the remittances. Kurdish and other immigrants participated in the Beirut region's commercial growth, which fed into the prosperity of bourgeois families who, as consumers, contributed to the internal growth of the service economy.

After World War II, when Lebanon achieved independence there was another surge of Kurds in the 50s and 60s, this time fleeing "the socioeconomic, cultural, and political repression that began in

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Publishers, 1988 and *The Modern Political Economy of Lebanon: The State and the Economy from Colonialism to Independence, 1939-1952*, Ph.D. dissertation, Oxford University, 1985.

Syria in 1958" (Meho 2002: n. p.).[22] It is believed that at least 50,000 Kurds arrived in Lebanon from Syria; many of them came as a result of the 1962 census in the al-Hasaka province in northeast Syria -- the area of the country with the densest Kurdish population (McDowall 2004: 458). A report by Human Rights Watch describes how Syria arbitrarily stripped 120,000–150,000 Kurdish citizens of their Syrian citizenship,[23] denying them and their offspring any human and civil rights (Human Rights Watch 1996: n. p.). Many of the Syrian Kurds "were drawn to Lebanon by the comparative dynamism and prosperity of the Lebanese economy…", particularly the "massive building boom of the 1950s and 1960" (McDowall 2004: 485). Kurds whose economic situation was improved and were sending remittances to their families in Turkey or Syria,[24] and this produced the phenomenon of chain migration, as other Kurds were encouraged to migrate by the example of successful migrants; yet others independently made the journey to join their families.

2.3 Population and Settlement in Lebanon

The ambiguity of Kurdish identity – the fact that there is no Kurdistan issuing identity cards – introduces a great deal of uncertainty into any generalization to be made about the situation and motives of migrant Kurds in the twentieth century. We do know that Kurds, unlike the Armenians, did not come to Lebanon en masse as refugees at first, but rather as individuals or families seeking work, or for political reasons, for instance, escaping military service - for in 1908, the revolutionary government of Turkey made it mandatory for Christians and Muslims alike to serve in the army – or despotism in general (Naff 1980:130).

It is interesting to compare the Kurd experience to that of the Armenians, who came to Lebanon between 1910s and early 1920s due to genocide in Ottoman Anatolia, and settled in Lebanon in international refugee camps or low-income housing areas made especially for them in Beirut. These settlements "are historically the oldest slums of Beirut" and are situated within and at the outskirt of the capital. These settlements, which were organized for the Armenians, became the prototype for later refugee settlements by the Syriacs (1920s) and Palestinians (1948), with the help of international organizations (Fawaz and Peillen 2003: 7-8).

The Kurds followed in the wake of the Armenians and the Syriacs, and "they occupied abandoned camps and deteriorating tenements in the city centre" (Fawaz and Peillen 2003: 7-8) and near the municipal boundaries of Beirut in areas such as al-Karantina, al-Maslakh, Burj Hammoud, el-Jnah,

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[22] Loukman Meho's Master's thesis *The Dilemma of Social and Political Integration of Ethnoclass Groups within Pluralistic Societies: The Case of the Kurds in Lebanon*. Master's thesis. Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1995 is the only study that was conducted of this cohort immediately prior to the naturalization of 1994. He documented the situation and aspiration of the un-naturalized Kurds. The thesis mapped out the socioeconomic and political situation of the Kurds at that important conjuncture. For this reason, we are comparing and contrasting our findings with his in this report.

[23] A similar fate happened to the Faili (Fayli) Kurds in Iraq who were also stripped of their Iraqi citizenship and were deported to Iran between 1969 and 1988 (Morad 1992: 130).

[24] Interview with the former (Local Registrar) *Mukhtar* MCS of Zoukak El Blat in Beirut conducted on September 4, 2010.

Burj al-Barajneh, etc. (McDowall 2004: 485), al-Basta, Zqaq al-Blat, the down-town sector, Furn al-Shubbak, 'Ayn al-Mrayseh, Raml al-Zrif (Meho 1995: 46). After the Lebanese Jews emigrated en masse as a consequence of the Civil War of 1975, the Kurds moved into neighborhoods where many Jews had lived in Bab Idris, Wadi Abou Jamil, and Mina al-Husn (McDowall 2004: 485).

The post-World War II Lebanon into which Syrian Kurds migrated was receptive to them partly because of the booming state of the economy, as the advanced financial system that had been put in place under the Mandate was fortuitously positioned to benefit from the influx of petro dollars from Middle Eastern countries, particularly the Gulf principalities, which had little financial infrastructure or experience in international finance and eager to find Middle Eastern intermediaries. As a result, labor-intensive sectors such as construction, services, and tourism experienced tremendous growth, requiring the low-wage labor that is the traditional strong suit of migrants and those who are located in economically depressed rural areas. Labor was thus recruited among the Kurds of Syria and Turkey (Mawsili 1995: 487).

Word-of-mouth accounts of the success of Kurds who had already moved to Lebanon encouraged more Kurds to join their kin and kith (Meho and Kawtharani 2003: 249), with the consequence that the Kurds' "temporary and seasonal migration became permanent" (Mawsili 1995: 487). It was a classic pattern of chain migration, in which the temporary migrant population, becoming more stable in its host country, attracts others until, at some critical mass, the pattern becomes fixed.

2.4 Composition of the Kurds in Lebanon

The group which is officially known and recognized under the generic name of 'Kurd' in Lebanon is in actuality a far from being homogenous entity. To non-Kurds, the Kurdish community of Lebanon may look like a coherent group; however, as we remarked above, during our research we discovered two major divisions of 'Kurds' in Lebanon: the 'Kurmanji Kurds' or those who consider themselves ethnically Kurds and the 'Arab Kurds' those who call themselves *Merdallis*[25]/*Muhallamis*[26] and are ethnically of Arab descent.[27]

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[25] *Merdalli* denotes "general appellation to all the people who come from the Mardin area in Southeastern Turkey". Dr. Shabo Talay of the Institut für Außereuropäische Sprachen und Kulturen, Lehrstuhl für Orientalische Philologie Friedrich Alexander at the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, telephone interview, March 3, 2011. Although *Merdalli* encompasses other than the *Muhallami* group, in this study we will use *Merdalli-Muhallami* to indicate the people who consider themselves non-Kurds and who use *Merdalli* and *Muhallami* interchangeably to identify themselves.

[26] *Muhallamiyeh* "is a group of people living in an area between Mediat and Mardin in Southeast Turkey. They speak an Arabic dialect known as the *Muhallami* which belongs to the so called *qultu* dialects. This group of dialects is spoken in Mesopotamia from Basra until Eastern Turkey. These dialects are the oldest level of Arabic spoken in that area" Dr. Shabo Talay, telephone interview, March 3, 2011. For further information, please consult Shabo Talay, *Arabic Dialects of Mesopotamia, in* Michael P. Streck and Stefan Weninger (Eds.), *Semitic Languages: An International Handbook on their Structure, their History and their Investigation.* Handbücher zur Sprach- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (HSK), Berlin, de Gruyter 2011 (Forthcoming).

[27] We made every effort to find reliable material on the history of this group in the languages we know, but we were unsuccessful. According to Talay, the history of this community has not yet been written in a scholarly manner and

We also found that there are several ethno-linguistic divisions. The Kurdish community in Lebanon is divided into two main groups: those who speak the Kurmanji dialect and those who speak an Arabic dialect (Meho and Kawtharani 2005: 249), the latter being referred to as *Merdalli-Muhallami*. The Kurmanji speakers "are known as "Kurmanj" and are considered ethnic Kurds and make up one third of the community (Meho and Kawtharani 2005: 249). The Arabic speaking group is considered, according to R. F., a Kurd who is the director of a cultural association in Beirut, "people with Arabic tongue but Kurdish geographic belonging."[28]

In terms of religion, the Kurds of Lebanon adhere to the Shafi'i School of the Sunni teaching of Islam. In terms of religious affiliation, the Kurds of Lebanon are almost homogenous, being all Sunnis. We should mention here that if there are Yazidis[29] or other sects among them, they do not overtly proclaim their beliefs and may use *takiya* (dissimulation) in order to avert discrimination against them by their own compatriots.

The Syrian Kurds, many of whom migrated to Lebanon, "did not constitute a homogenous group at the beginning of the twentieth century. On the contrary, the populations designated as Kurds were characterized by their segmented nature…" (Tejel 2009: 9). The Kurdish ethnic identity was "more likely determined according to their social and political interests and constraints and less often in terms of their linguistic and historic identifying traits" (Tejel 2009: 9). A case in point is the *Merdallis/Muhallamis* who claim alternatively to be Arabs or Kurds, and who are recognized officially as the latter by the Lebanese government. In fact, when it comes to self-identification, the *Merdallis/Muhallamis* have difficulties communicating to outsiders who they are; they labor to fit their sense of identity into the ethnic categories used by outsiders (Meho and Kawtharani 2003: 249). In our interviews with businessman I. O., for instance, he indicated that as a *Merdalli-Muhallami*, he does not understand the Kurdish language; however, he could carry out a conversation with a Syriac speaking person without too much effort. [30]

The *Muhallamis* of Lebanon are composed of families such as the "Atriss, Fakhro, Fattah, Harb, Miri, Omari, Omayrat, Ramadan, Rammu, Shabu, Sharif, Shaykhmus, Siyala, and al-Zein" (Meho and Kawtharani 2003: 250).

2.5 Linguistic Diversity in Lebanon

what has been meagerly published or orally circulated is not well founded and lacks investigative rigor. Telephone interview, March 3, 2011.

[28] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.

[29] Yazidis are called "devil-worshippers" by unsympathetic neighbors, but in fact the religion is derived from a mixture of Sunni Islam and "old Iranian and Anatolian religions, including sun worship and belief in reincarnation". Yazidis speak Kurmanji. They are not recognized by Kurds as Kurds because of their religious peculiarities. Feeling persecuted and not protected, many have immigrated to Germany (van Bruinessen 1992: 37-38).

[30] Telephone interview on September 17, 2010 with I. O. in Lebanon and face-to-face interviews with M. F., A. O., and K. S. in Essen, Germany between February 14 and 19, 2011.

In Lebanon, the prevalent Arabic has infiltrated the Kurdish language. Young Lebanese Kurds are commonly fluent in both languages (at least orally). Furthermore, the existence of substantially different dialects and sub-cultures should give us a sociologically more complex idea of the Kurdish culture, which is far from the simplistic idea of a "Kurdish nation".

2.6 Social Composition

The economic profile of the Kurds in Lebanon in this period skewed overwhelmingly towards the kind of temporary labor for which they were first recruited. In other words, Kurds were not gaining fixed positions within the industrial or agricultural proletariat; this is partly due to the fact that the majority had very little education, if any (Meho and Kawtharani 2003: 250). The early arrivals were neither skilled labor nor craftsmen (Mawsili 1995: 488). Being unskilled manual workers, "they first entered the labor market as porters and box manufacturers in the vegetable market of downtown Beirut" (Meho and Kawtharani 2003: 251). However, over time, a number of Kurds acquired marketable skills, such as painters, construction workers, auto-mechanics, tailors, and carpenters. The Kurds became especially known as wholesale vegetable merchants, a sector they gradually monopolized. As for the women, they worked mainly as housekeepers and janitors.

The Kurds were "essentially composed of immigrants, former wine-growers and peasants who left the areas of Mardin and Bohtan in Turkish Kurdistan… and settled in Beirut in the 1920s and 1930s" (Mawsili 1995: 488). When in Lebanon, the Kurds worked as "day labourers in the construction industry, benefiting from the massive building boom of the 1950s and 1960s. Others were sharecroppers, mainly on the fruit and market garden estates of the coastal plain, while others became street peddlers, a significant sector of the retail economy" (McDowall 2004: 485). Yet others occupied "the lowest end of the social and economic scale, working as porters, small shopkeepers or unskilled labourers" (Vanly 1992: 165).

Most of the Kurds in Lebanon originated from the villages of al-Rajdiyeh, Ma'sarteh, al-Mkhashniyeh, al-Mnezil, Marjeh, Jib al-Graw, Kinderib, Marska, Zeni, Fateh, Matina, and others, most of which are in Mardin and Tur'Abdin" in Turkey, a rural area (Meho 1995: 44-45). In Lebanon, the Kurds, like other rural migrant families, "… tended to settle in urban locations according either to tribal or village identity. Thus, the solidarities of pre-urban existence were reinforced but also politicized in the often alien as well as alienating culture of city life" (McDowall 2004: 486). Our demographic information about the Kurds in Lebanon is limited, as we have pointed out, due to the controversies that have swirled around any project to count the different ethnicities in Lebanon; changes in the proportion of different denominations would create political tension around the question of dividing up seats in the legislative and executive branch accordingly. Thus, how many Kurds remained in the country or how many are naturalized is subject to various educated estimates. The most exaggerated estimate of the Kurdish population could be linked to the interest of the political parties to maintain their political presence and to negotiate or bargain

with the Sunni political elites for profit. Jamil Meho in 1975 claimed that the Kurds were 70,000 (*Al-Safir* Dec 28, 1975). Mohammad Jamil Meho in his pamphlet "A New Vision for the Kurdish Cause" published in 1977 claimed that they were between 75 and 100 thousands. *Al-Anwar* May 8, 1991 estimated their number at 35 thousand. *An-Nahar* put the pre-war population of Kurds in Lebanon at 200 thousand, dwindling to a post-war population of 15,000, (*An-Nahar* Supplement October 2, 1993). The latest United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimate is of 25,000, or 0.6% of the total population of Lebanon (UNHCR 2008). All post-war counts agree that the Kurdish population dropped due to out-migration during the Civil War, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and most pertinently, the intra-sectarian wars between the Shiites and the Sunnis that involved the Kurds. Another intangible factor may be Syria's control over Beirut (Meho and Kawtharani 2003: 266-267), and the Syrians withdrawal of their support for the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan* (PKK) military bases and camps in the Syrian occupied parts of Lebanon (Norwegian Landinfo 2010: 16).

Those who migrated out of Lebanon headed mainly towards Germany and Sweden. They continue to network with their families in Lebanon. Some even applied for Lebanese citizenship and acquired it. Many send remittances to their families back in Lebanon, which, after household expenses are deducted, are normally invested in real estate. [31]

2.7 Early Political and Cultural Activities

As mentioned previously, the French during the Mandate wanted, for their own reasons, to encourage an intellectual cadre of Kurds to create a nationalist discourse along classic national lines. Furthermore, the Mandate allowed these cadres to engage in political activities that were, in retrospect, fundamental to providing legitimacy for the Kurdish nationalist struggle. Due to this activity, Kurdish organizations emerged in many of the main cities of the Levant, namely Beirut, Aleppo and Damascus. One of these early founding organizations was The League *Khoyboun*, founded in 1927 and now considered the first Kurdish nationalist organization.

Established in Bhamdoun in Mount Lebanon, the League created the prototype of modern Kurdish nationalist discourse, proclaiming the agenda of unifying all Kurds across the Middle East in an independent Kurdistan that was imagined to have no religious, linguistic, or class distinctions (Tejel 2007: 5). Even as the Kurdish nationalists reacted against Kemalism, they took from it the ideal of a completely secular Kurdish state. The credit for this approach undoubtedly goes to the Bedir Khan siblings Sorayya, and Kamuran. In 1927, the League declared from its headquarters in Lebanon "the formation of a Kurdish government in exile" (Izady 1992: 62).

[31] Interview with the former (Local Registrar) *Mukhtar* MCS of Zkak El Blat in Beirut conducted on September 4, 2010.

The League was the child of exiled Kurdish intellectuals, modernist tribal leaders, and some descendants of the old Kurdish princely houses living in exile (Izady 1992: 62). The intellectuals led by the Bedir Khans succeeded, although with difficulty, in "adapting the nationalist discourse of the European type to the mental universe of the representatives of the Kurdish traditional world. The sermon of fidelity to the Kurdish cause, formulated by the *Khoyboun* League, constitutes a good example of this tentative adaptation of the national ethos to the particularities of the tribal milieus" (Tejel 2007: 8).

The leaders of the League succeeded in forging official diplomatic relations with representatives of France, Great Britain, Italy, Iran, and the Soviet Union, as well as with non-state actors such as the Armenians and the Turkish opposition. These politico-military alliances bore fruit in future revolts and political activities (Tejel 2007: 5) outside of the Lebanese domain. The French mandatory authority encouraged and supported the creation of Kurdish language courses at l'Ecole Supérieure Arabe in Damascus, another for the French officers of the du Haut Commissariat, and a night course in Beirut, as well as the founding of such magazines as *Hawar* and *Ronahî*.

The French Mandate in Lebanon and Syria pursued a policy of aggravating Turkey by facilitating the project of *Khoyboun* and the exiled Kurdish intellectuals and leaders by giving them freedom of mobility and ensuring the safety of the operation of the League in 1927 till the end of the Mandate and the independence of Lebanon in 1943 and of Syria in 1946. During these twenty or so years, *Khoyboun* managed to become the main player in the Kurdish nationalist movement. Its leaders have been adopted as heroes by contemporary Kurdish nationalists, who view themselves as the heirs of the collective nationalistic ideal of an independent Kurdish state and a revived and modernized Kurdish language (Tejel 2007: 6).

Khoyboun is acknowledged to have created a collective Kurdish identity that continues to manifest itself not only among the Kurds of the homeland in Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq, but also in the host countries in the Middle East region as well as in the West.

2.8 The Kurds during the Nation-Building Process and Afterwards

At the same time that Kurdish intellectuals were advancing this nationalist discourse, the four countries in which Kurds were most numerous (Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran) were implementing nationalist projects of their own, based on the dominant identity and culture of the governing class and excluding the identity and culture of minority groups.

In Syria, the government claimed that the Kurds, despite several thousand years of local existence, were newcomers and squatters, which led to the deportation of nearly a third of Syria's Kurds in the 1960s, pushing some toward its borders and others into the interior, as far as the cities of Hama and Damascus. Ironically, Syria had hosted a large Kurdish refugee community from Anatolia after the

Turkish Republican forces engaged in intensive warfare with rebellious (or even peaceful) Kurdish populations in the course of the 1920s and 1930s. Many Kurdish refugees found homes in Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and Egypt, where they can be found today.

2.9 Citizenship in Lebanon

The French Mandate for Lebanon and Syria was ordained by the League of Nations in the aftermath of the partitioning of the Ottoman Empire that came about through the treaties that ended World War I. In accordance with the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed between Britain and France, the British took control of the territory that now comprises Iraq, Palestine and Jordan. The French took control of Lebanon, Syria, and the Hatay province, or Alexandretta region, of Turkey. Lebanon became independent in 1943, Syria in 1946, and the Hatay was ceded to Turkey in 1939 by the French.

It is important before we discuss the Lausanne Treaty, which served as the basis for the citizenship law of mandate-era Lebanon and after, to refer briefly to the Treaty of Sèvres, which preceded Lausanne. The Treaty of Sèvres, which was the peace treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Allies at the end of World War I, "envisaged interim autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas of Turkey with a view to full independence…." (McDowall 1992: 17) The Treaty of Sèvres, which aimed at creating ethnic states for the Kurds and the Armenians, was never ratified by the Turks, since it served as the pretext for Mustafa Kemal's national movement to terminate the monarchy with the establishment of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara in April 1920. After the Allies encouraged an irredentist Greece to make a disastrous invasion of Turkey, which was decisively repelled by Kemal's forces, the Allies had to return to the negotiating table in 1923 to negotiate the Treaty of Lausanne on more favorable terms for the Turks. The Turkish national geographic entity in Asia Minor was preserved.

The Lausanne Treaty nullified the Treaty of Sèvres, granted Anatolia and much of Thrace to Turkey, and led to the international recognition of the sovereignty of the new Republic of Turkey as the successor state of the defunct Ottoman Empire. Its effect was to eliminate the hope that the Western powers would grant the Kurds an autonomous homeland through *force majeure*.

However, the Western powers found it in their interest to encourage and discourage the nationalist aspirations of various groups in the Middle East, especially the Kurds. The Kurdish colony of Beirut, under the protection of the French, became the base of Prince Kamuran Bedir Khan, who represented the hope of the Kurdish nationalists. Kamuran was practical enough, however, to also assist Kurds who desired the protection of Lebanese nationality, and sent proposals to the French Mandating authority regarding this issue.[32] Certain segments of this community "found in Kamuran Bedir Khan, himself an exiled, an intermediary between them and the Lebanese authority in order to

[32] CADN, Fonds Beyrouth, Services Spéciaux, no 2202. Information spécial no 1899, "La nationalité Libanaise et les Kurdes", Beyrouth, le 31 août 1994.

obtain their Lebanese nationality" (Tejel 2007: 7). Kamuran succeeded in this role and was able to obtain residential identification cards for some of the Kurds of Beirut; these cards became known as "Kamuran IDs".

The migrant Kurd demand for naturalization and the interest of the Sunni political elites in the Kurds as Sunnis offered Kamuran the opportunity of becoming an actor in the politics of the capital, allowing him to knit privileged connections to the upper strata of the Lebanese Sunni power, such as Sami Solh, at the time Prime Minister. This and other efforts made of Kamuran a political broker with a constituency among the Kurds, although his potential ability to use them for political pointmaking was limited by the community's disinclination to involve itself in Lebanon's politics (Tejel 2007: 7, 43).

In regard to citizenship, only few applied and obtained Lebanese nationality, but the majority simply did not consider it important to opt for official recognition because they were used to having the terms of citizenship imposed upon them, as in 1869 when the Sultan's subjects were turned by decree into Ottoman citizens. The concept of citizenship in the western sense was alien not only to the Kurds but also to almost all the people of Ottoman Middle East. Furthermore, since the Kurds and similar groups lived all their lives under the collective authority of the family and the tribe, the idea of a larger political loyalty seemed vague and foreign.[33]

2.10 The Naturalization Law of Lebanon

The 1925 nationality law,[34] which was issued five years after the declaration of the "State of Greater Lebanon" in 1920[35] and has been seen as the founding document of Lebanese nationality, is based on Article 30 of the Lausanne Treaty.[36] The basic principle of the Lausanne Treaty was that Ottoman subjects "habitually resident in territories detached from Turkey became *ipso facto,* in the conditions laid down by the local laws, nationals of the state to which the territory was transferred (art. 123)" (Parolin 2009:76). Individual subjects were given the 'right of option' for Turkish nationality (art. 124) or the nationality of one of the states detached from the Ottoman Empire.

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[33] See Ibrahim Bisharat, Citizenship in the Middle East : Challenges and Prospects, Assemblée Européenne des Citoyens, French branch of the international network Helsinki Citizens' Assembly(AEC - HCA France), 31 Janvier 2008, [http://www.reseau-ipam.org/spip.php?article1376].

[34] Decision no. 15 of 19/1/1925.

[35] The Greater Lebanon as established by Decree no. 318 by the French High Commissioner on 31/8/1920 was an expansion of the already existing "Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon" and in addition to the district of Mount Lebanon contained the districts of the Bekaa and the cities of Beirut, Tripoli, Sidon and Tyre, which were detached from the Ottoman Empire. The 1926 constitution transformed it into the Republic of Lebanon.

[36] Article 32: "Persons over eighteen years of age, habitually resident in territory detached from Turkey in accordance with the present Treaty, and differing in race from the majority of the population of such territory shall, within two years from the coming into force of the present Treaty, be entitled to opt for the nationality of one of the States in which the majority of the population is of the same race as the person exercising the right to opt, subject to the consent of that State."

Once the former Ottoman subject opted for his/her nationality, "the state for which the former Ottoman subject opted could not refuse its 'returning national' (Parolin 2009: 76).

Central to the implementation of the 1925 law was the succeeding 1932 census by which people residing in the "State of Greater Lebanon" could register. These registries formed the cornerstone for the acquisition of Lebanese citizenship.[37] Individuals failing to register in the 1932 census were classified as individuals of "Unknown or Unspecified Nationality" and those whose Lebanese parents failed to register them were classified under "Veiled Nationality" (*Maktumi al Hawiyya or al Qayd*).

In 1961, the Lebanese government issued an "Unspecified Nationality" card (*Jinsiyya Gheir Mouayyana*) to stateless people in Lebanon. Under the provisions of this ID, children born in Lebanon to the holders of these IDs automatically acquired Lebanese citizenship upon registration. According to R. F. "negative reactions from both Christians and Muslims for fear that the Kurds' number would increase and overtake the Lebanese element caused the change of this ID into another type called 'Nationality under Consideration.'"[38] The issuance of a new ID was mandated and called the "Nationality under Consideration" (*Jinsiyya Qayd al-Dars*), which replaced the former. The new ID was introduced through the law of June 10, 1962 and Regulations of the Interior Ministry on August 2, 1962. This ID is a residency permit of the category "Nationality under Consideration" and is supposed to be renewed every year in person by adults and minors at the General Security Office. Holders of this ID were not permitted to own property, vote in elections, serve in the army, take jobs in the public sector, etc.

There have been no further reforms to the legislation concerning the *Qayd al-Dars* cards. To renew this card one needs the original card, an introduction letter from the Local Registrar (*Mukhtar)* signed by two witnesses, copies of the identity cards of the two witnesses, and three passport photos signed and stamped by the *Mukhtar,* $200 US dollars fee for a renewal of one year, and $600 US dollars for a renewal of three years. If the holder of such ID is late one day in renewing it, he will be charged a late fee equivalent to a one year fee.

2.11 The 1994 Naturalization Decree

In 1994 a decree was signed by the President of the Lebanese Republic, Elias Harawi, Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and Minister of Interior Beshara Merhej naturalizing a large number of persons. This decree, which was preceded by the establishment of the Commission on Naturalization in 1992 during the first post-war government led by Rafic Hariri, aimed at

[37] The census' results –the only census ever conducted after the adoption of the Nationality Law- were debated and challenged by Muslims and Christians, both seeking to ensure demographical supremacy that constitute the basis of power sharing in Lebanon.
[38] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.

naturalizing some stateless groups such as the Kurds, the Arabs of Wadi Khalid, and the Bedouins, among others. However, the majority of those who acquired Lebanese nationality under this decree were not stateless: over 42% of the naturalized were Syrian nationals versus 36% stateless, 16% Palestinians, and 6% from the rest of the world including descendants of Lebanese immigrants (Fatfat 2006: n. p.).

According to the Official Gazetteer *Al-Jarida al-Rasmiyya*, No 26 dated June 30, 1994 Annex 2, Decree No 5247 granted Lebanese nationality to eighty-eight thousand two hundred and seventy-eight (88,278) persons. Thirty-nine thousand four hundred and sixty families (39,460) were added to the Lebanese population (see Naturalization Map in Appendix I). The decree did not list any names of those born in 1977 or before, as these people were considered minors. When the minors are added, the total number of the naturalized becomes 157,216 individuals, from 80 countries[39] mostly Sunnis and Shiite.[40] Around 32,564 of them were holders of *Qayd al-Dars* cards.[41] The Decree naturalized 25,071 persons mostly Shiites who held Palestinian refugee[42] status and who resided in the southern border villages of Lebanon.

The Decree, which "sought – among other things – to rectify some of the initial problems that came into being when the disputed 1932 Census became the basis for the enjoyment of citizenship" (van Waas 2010: 7), did not have any "eligibility standards", granted citizenship "without any defined requirements and prerequisites" (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007: n. p.). There were many issues created by careless execution of the Decree, and there were also reports "of arbitrary decision-making, failure to include persons who were outside of the country and administrative errors" (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007: n. p.). The Decree not only created new problems, but also it failed to fully address the issue of non-citizens resident in Lebanon, a situation which came about during the state years of formation and was exacerbated by the influx of persons into Lebanon during the Civil War years and the Syrian occupation era. Many of those who claim to be stateless Lebanese belong to the "Veiled Nationality" or to the "Nationality under Consideration" groups. Furthermore, the issuance of the Decree and its

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[39] *Ad-Diyar* daily, Tuesday, October 17, 1998; also *Al-Anwar* daily, November 8, 1998.

[40] Fady Fayyad, *Décret de Naturalisation du 30/6/1994: Analyse Démographique des Arabes de Wadi Khaled, Notes de Recherche en Certificat de Spécialité en Démographie*, Beirut Liban, 1998 p.8.

[41] See the lists submitted by Acting Interior Minister Ahmed Fatfat to the National Dialogue Roundtable in 2006 and Akram Hamdan, The Total Number until March 2006: 202527 Naturalized from 80 Countries (in Arabic), *Al Mustaqbal* newspaper, 30 March 2006.

[42] The total number of Palestinians who have been naturalized Lebanese citizens since 1948 is estimated to have reached 60,000 persons (Newsletter, Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Center, *Shaml*, February 6, 1997.) It should be noted that the Protocol on the Treatment of Palestinian Refugees (1965) of the League of Arab States summit in Casablanca termed as the 'Casablanca Protocol' (1965) called upon the Middle Eastern countries hosting of Palestinian refugees "to grant them rights of work, travel and residency" (Knudsen 2009: 55), but allowed for the restriction of their access to nationality (Shiblak 2006: 8-9).

implementation opened an ongoing debate between Christians and Muslims over its legality in both form and content.[43]

The Maronite League challenged the Decree officially on August 26, 1994, contending that the naturalization *en masse* was unconstitutional and that it granted citizenship to unentitled persons instead to the descendants of Lebanese emigrants whose parents failed to opt for Lebanese citizenship following the Treaty of Lausanne. In addition, by granting Palestinian refugees citizenship, their right of return to their homeland is violated. The League also contested the Decree for further disturbing confessional balance and communal co-existence in Lebanon.[44] The Maronites positioned themselves as defenders of "the confessional balance and putting the needs of the country first, colloquially referred to as the 'Lebanese formula'" (Knudsen 2009: 58). The Civil War and the Syrian occupation, which have caused the death of tens of thousands, and the overseas exodus of hundreds of thousands of Lebanese "struck fatally and especially at the size and cohesion of the Christian elements of the population" (Nisan 2000: 60). The League feared that the Lebanese socio-sectarian environment, which was severely affected by the Civil War and the Syrian occupation, would be further impacted by the sectarian Muslim composition of the naturalized, in as much as these formed 75% of their total number (Fatfat 2006: n. p.). The "selective naturalization" was thought to be "politically motivated." (Abdelnour 2003: n.p.)

The aforementioned data about those who were naturalized and their respective numbers lend credibility to the long-held belief within the Christian community that the 1994 Decree, which has naturalized thousands of Sunni Muslims, mostly from Syria or Bedouin nomads, was a political naturalization act, of which one of the purposes was to alter the demographic make-up of the country in favor of the Sunni community. In our interview with S. F. a high level official in the Future Movement,[45] S. F. confirmed that the 1994 naturalization Decree was entirely a political naturalization undertaking, rather than of a human rights project.[46]

Naturalizing in order to shift the demographic balance of a country towards one faction or another is a common enough phenomenon in the post nation-state eras. Bahrain for example has naturalized

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[43] Muslim circles and clerics hailed the decree while Christian parties voiced their objection and pointed to flagrant violations of naturalization policy and rules *An-Nahar* daily, March 3, 1994; June 28, 1994; April 23, 1997; May 8, 1997; November 3, 1998; *Al-Wassat* daily, July 18, 1994 and August 27, 1994.

[44] See Thibaut Jaulin Lebanese Politics of Nationality and Emigration, EUI Working Papers, RSCAS No. 2006/29, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Mediterranean Programme Series, 2006 and Simon Haddad, Palestinians in Lebanon: Towards Integration or Conflict, *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 7(3) pp. 29. Webposted February 15th, 2002.

[45] The Future Movement (*Tayyar Al Mustaqbal*) is a Lebanese political movement. Its members and supporters are predominantly Sunnis and its representatives currently hold one of the largest parliamentary blocs/coalitions in the Lebanese Parliament. The Movement "evolved out of the political machine of the family of Rafic al-Hariri, the assassinated former prime minister of Lebanon." (Cammett and Issar 2010: 388)

[46] Interview conducted in Beirut at one of the Future Movement's offices on August 26, 2010.

Sunnis in order to alter the make-up of the country,[47] while naturalization laws in 15 States of the former Soviet Union specify religion and ethnicity as prerequisites for acquisition of nationality in their territories.[48]

The Maronite League challenge was presented to the State Consultative Council *Majlis Shura al-Dawla*,[49] the highest legal authority in Lebanon. On July 5, 2003, the State Consultative Council rendered its decision by referring the file of the naturalized to the Ministry of the Interior for re-examination and investigation for the purpose of denaturalizing select suspect individuals.[50] It should be noted here that the verdicts of the State Consultative Council "are not issued with obligations to the Lebanese state, since its verdicts are not executed by force, but are left up to the goodwill of the state." (Chalhoub 2004: 18) As a consequence of the Council's verdict, the Ministry of Interior established a committee with the task of re-examining all the applications to ensure that the applicants had fulfilled the legal requirements for obtaining Lebanese nationality. The committee issued a report and referred it to the Ministry, which already had prepared a draft decree for the withdrawal of nationality from those who did not fulfill the required conditions. So far, the decree has not been signed. There is speculation that no prime minister as yet is willing to sign such a decree for fear of going against his Sunni co-religionists, who were the major demographic beneficiary of the Decree.

In 2010, the Minister of Interior Ziad Baroud reopened the process by requesting the State Consultative Council to review each of the files. He stated on February 5, 2010 that the ministry has identified some who were naturalized while serving time in prison and that the Ministry had prepared a draft decree and sent it to the Council of Ministers to withdraw select suspect individuals from the naturalization decree. Once the draft decree is signed and enforced, all those who completed the proper forms in order to become Lebanese citizens would no longer feel threatened by the abrogation of their legal status (*An-Nahar* 2010). In the meantime, uncertainty hangs over the mass of the naturalized, despite the fact that they technically enjoy all the privileges of being full citizens under the law.[51]

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[47] See Political Naturalization in Bahrain: Various Violations of Citizens and Foreign Workers Rights, *Bahrain Center for Human Rights,* September, 2006, [http://www.bahrainrights.org/node/425] and Bahrain's Sectarian Challenge, *International Crisis Group,* Middle East Report N°40 – 6 May 2005, [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Bahrain/Bahrains%20Sectarian%20Challenge.ashx].

[48] Shushanik Makaryan. Citizenship Acquisition and Naturalization of Immigrants in the 15 Former Soviet Union Republics, *Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, TBA, New York, New York City*, Aug 11, 2007.

[49] "The State Consultative Council functions as an appellate or Cassation level court to review judicial decisions made by a variety of administrative bodies and also acts as an original court for certain types of disputes such as annulment requests against ministerial decrees for abuse of power" (Legal Guide to Lebanon, n.d., n. p.).

[50] State Consultative Council [*Majlis al-Shura*], Decision no: 484/2002-2003, 7/5/2003, p. 38.

[51] President Michel Suleiman has recently signed two decrees (Decrees 6690 and 6691 dated 28 October 2011) withdrawing Lebanese citizenship from 53 persons in the first decree and 123 persons in the second decree, as well as all their family members who were naturalised correspondingly either by marriage, or by birth, or by judicial or administrative decisions. These decrees are a first step towards implementing the decision taken by the State

It should be noted here however that Lebanon has not developed its regulatory frameworks regarding immigrants' acquisition of citizenship and integration,[52] in spite of the fact that the country has long been both a target for migrants and a source of significant out-migration.

Consultative Council (Majlis Shura al-dawlah) in 2003 to revoke Lebanese nationality from those who had fraudulently acquired it in 1994 based on the naturalisation decree 5247 of June 20, 1994.

52 See Anna Di Bartolomeo, Tamirace Fakhoury, and Delphine Perrin, *CARIM Migration Profile: Lebanon*, January 2010, [http://www.carim.org/public/migrationprofiles/MP_Lebanon_EN.pdf].

SECTION III- NATURALIZATION AND SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS (SSS)

3.1 Introduction

Naturalization is the process through which an immigrant who is not born in the country obtains citizenship in the host country. Usually, this is affected by some standard legal procedure upon his/her application and the granting of the nationality by the host country. Theoretically there are two distinctive but interrelated stances about the motivations driving the pursuit of naturalization. While Ong (1998) emphasizes wanting to acquire citizenship as a desire to access political rights, such as the right to run for an office, Aleinikoff (2001) views acquisition of citizenship as a drive to attain economic rights such as access to certain job opportunities and state services otherwise denied to non-citizens. Yang, on the other hand, assumes that immigrants weigh the benefits *versus* the costs and the advantages *versus* disadvantages of citizenship when considering naturalization (Yang 1994: 451-452). Whatever the motives or the decision-making procedure, the result is to confer upon the new-citizen all the rights and privileges of the old citizen (Ong 1998; Aleinikoff 2001).

Access to these rights should theoretically benefit the successful applicant; his or her socio-economic life should improve, along with his or her capacity to participate in the political process. A literature review on studies of naturalized immigrants over many countries shows that the reality of these benefits is variable, with downward mobility and political indifference being a very possible outcome (Portes and Rumbaut 1996). Pivnenko and DeVoretz (2004) have noted the success of Ukrainian immigrants in increasing their income following citizenship acquisition in the United States and Canada, while Bevelander (2000) found that in Sweden newly naturalized citizens experienced a decline in labor market participation. This stands in contrast to the findings of Bratsberg *et al.* (2002), who found a positive correlation between naturalization and integration into the labor market and higher incomes. Fougère and Safi (2006) found that naturalization has a strong positive bearing on the employment prospects of immigrants in France, particularly of those who would otherwise fall into the category of the unemployable. Mata (1999) on the other hand did not observe any relationship between naturalization and immigrants' wages in Canada. Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) and Pantoja and Gershon (2006) demonstrated a marked association between naturalization and political participation. As this list shows, most of the research has concentrated on the correlation between citizenship acquisition and integration into the labor market, along with the wage-earning differential between the pre- and post-naturalization individual. Very few if any studied the impact of naturalization on the socioeconomic mobility of the

naturalized, and even scarcer are the studies about naturalization and its effects on the life of the naturalized themselves, *i.e. intragenerational effects*.

It is important to understand, firstly, what we mean by socioeconomic mobility. Sociological literature defines socioeconomic mobility in terms of movement between social classes and/or occupational groups on a number of dimensions (for instance, education), whereas the economic literature generally focuses on income and income mobility. Socioeconomic mobility, basically upward social mobility, is the larger category, and it matters because i) "lack of [upward] social mobility may imply inequality of opportunity; ii) economic efficiency depends on everyone, whatever their social origin, being able to employ their talents; and iii) people who feel that they can improve their quality of life through their own talents and efforts are more likely to participate in and contribute to society…" consequently downward social mobility "might cause economic instability, resentment, unhappiness, and social tensions (Aldridge 2003: 189).

Researchers have conceptualized immigrants' mobility within a temporal framework as an *intergenerational* process, whereby the first-generation enter the society at the bottom tiers of the stratification ladder and the second-generation climb the ladder to reach socio-economic parity with the native population (Hirschman 1996: 56). The degree of openness of a society – the economic and social opportunities it presents to all participants – may be indicated by the degree of *intergenerational* mobility, which serves as a proxy for the measurement of equal opportunity in a society. For instance this can be marked by the comparison of father-to-son mobility, or of mother-to-daughter (Vallet 2001: 4). In the intergenerational mobility context, "the recipient unit is usually the family, and the analysis is based on more than one generation, focusing instead on dynasties by tracking social indicators of the parent and the child" (Azevedo and Bouillon 2009: 11). This approach, which dominates the research field, concentrates on native-born citizens, neglecting the impact of naturalization on *intragenerational* mobility.

Contingent upon the inherited and acquired abilities, *intergenerational* and *intragenerational* socioeconomic mobility is dependent on such macro-variables as the degree of equality of opportunities in a country, on the stability of the political state of affairs, the quality of education and other indispensable services, and the laws governing the country. It is also dependent on micro-variables, such as the level of the individuals, their education, their social capital, their resilience, the degree of their industriousness and their aspirations. Hence, there is a close association between the economic system, political conditions, and the laws of a country, individual attributes and socioeconomic mobility.

Mobility can be measured in absolute or relative terms. Absolute mobility "occurs because of economic growth, which normally ensures that each generation is better off, or has a higher standard of living, on average, than the one before," while relative mobility "can occur regardless of what is happening to the society as a whole. Individuals can change their position relative to others, moving

up or down within the ranks as one would expect in a true meritocracy." (Sawhill and Morton 2007: 4-6).

Sawhill and Morton stress that relative mobility occurs in a meritocratic society, *i.e.* in a society where "those who work the hardest and have the greatest talent, regardless of class, gender, race, or other characteristics, have the highest income." However, they also identified two other types of societies: The "fortune cookie" society in which "where one ends up bears no relation to talent or energy, and is purely a matter of luck," and the class-stratified society where "family background is all-important" and where mobility between classes is little to nonexistent" (Sawhill and Morton 2007: 4).

In Lebanon, the social structure "represents a typical example of how traditional social stratification nourishes all aspects of inequality and makes poverty generate poverty. Despite some efforts to secularize society, Lebanon is still fragmented across sectarian cleavages, where family-religious-tribal ties appear to be stronger" (Haladjian-Henriksen 2006: 315). For this reason, "many Lebanese citizens identify themselves more with their sect than with the country as a whole." (El Khoury and Panizza 2005: 137). Furthermore, in Lebanese society, with its kinship system, clientelist politics and 'grand' families, *'wasta'* (connection with powerful people) is regarded as one of the chief elements necessary to gaining jobs, high income, access to education in the sense of grants/scholarships, political power, etc. Sometimes *wasta* benefits the lower income individual, but more often it operates to freeze people into their existing social strata. We do not agree with the univocity of Haladjian-Henriksen's premise that "social mobility can be considered to be strongly connected to *wasta* gain or loss" and that "'losing *wasta*' would simply mean 'impoverishment'" (Haladjian-Henriksen 2006: 316). Haladjian-Henriksen is ignoring other equally powerful factors such as family background, education, economic status, and migration, as well as the impact of protracted conflicts. In his study Panizza found that "social mobility in Lebanon, it seems, is extremely low and family background is a key factor in determining social outcomes" (Panizza 2002: n. p.) and in his research Khoury found that "education and emigration have perhaps been the main drives for class mobility and change" in Lebanon (Khuri 1969: 31). Furthermore, in her description of the Lebanese society, Saadeh states that class is an open system where individuals are ranked as individuals instead of communities and where membership is based mostly on economic status. She also claims that upward mobility between classes is feasible through wealth and professionalism.[53] The transcendence of social class origins from the lower class to the middle- or upper-classes in Lebanese society may occur through education and through foreign citizenship, as Suad Joseph has observed (Joseph 1988:31) and through immigration as the only conduit of ambitious young Lebanese to further their status given the boundaries of social mobility within the country as Saadeh indicates (Saadeh 1993: 91-94). In addition, Hamdan found that prior to the Civil War of 1975-1990, Lebanon had a vibrant middle class (Hamdan 1994: 193); this class diminished during the war and

[53] See Safia Saadeh, *The Social Structure of Lebanon: Democracy or Servitude?,* Dar An-Nahar, 1993.

has become vulnerable in the post-war eras (Delpal 2001: 75) due to protracted conflicts that continue to plague the country, as well as the collapse of the national currency after 1985 among others.[54]

Although family connections, education, migration, occupation, structural changes, and the like are important determinants in social mobility, they cannot entirely explain differences in the likelihood that particular individuals will be upwardly or downwardly mobile. Individual characteristics also play a vital role in determining the status one acquires in society.

In the following section, we discuss the methodology used in this research to determine whether the acquisition of citizenship has had upward or downward mobility effect on the naturalized Kurds.

[54] See Ibrahim Maroun, *La Question des Classes Moyennes au Liban…* In UNDP (ed.), *Linking Economic Growth and Social Development in Lebanon,* Beirut, UNDP, 167-183, [http://www.undp.org.lb/communication/publications/linking/Session7.pdf] ; see also Thierry Kochuyt, La misère du Liban : Une Population Appauvrie, peu d'État et Plusieurs Solidarités Souterraines, *Tiers Monde, 2004,* Volume 45, Issue 179, pp. 515-537.

SECTION IV- METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This report studies the impact of the naturalization of 1994 on the socio-economic mobility of the naturalized Kurds of Lebanon, particularly those who live and vote in Beirut.

We seek to compare the Kurds' situation at the time of naturalization with their situation fifteen years after. As we are looking for a trajectory within the individual's own life time, we are concerned with *intragenerational* mobility. Our study also takes into account the structure of society as defined by an occupational hierarchy, which has long been one of the concerns of sociology, as well as income, the concern of economics.

This section will address the methodology, methods, and operational field measures. Discussion of these components prepares the ground for subsequent survey results in subsequent sections. Both the methodological approach and choice of methods are based on previous research experience of the surveyors in the area of empirical research in Lebanon.

4.1.1 Methodology

The data of this report were drawn from a survey concerned with documenting the socio-demographic characteristics, socioeconomic mobility, and political participation of the Kurds residing in Beirut at the time of naturalization and fifteen years after naturalization. We surveyed 164 subjects who lived in various neighborhoods of the capital of Lebanon, Beirut, which is where the majority of the Kurds reside. Rather than rely overwhelmingly on descriptive statistics which often conflate analytical categories, this report construed statistical interrelationships between variables that were verified by qualitative data generated from biographical and experts' interviews. These interviews sought to elicit a clear picture of the participants' perspectives on the research topic. This report used mixed methodologies by employing qualitative with quantitative analysis; in other words, we mixed survey data with interviews, seeing this as the most profound form of triangulation of research methods, which would allow us to enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings and discover broader generalizations.

In preparation for the study, regular research was conducted including a literature review in Arabic, English and French. After this, our team garnered 'pre-field' familiarity with the community by making contact with and holding several information meetings with the heads of Kurdish organizations and selected Kurdish journalists, as well as with socio-cultural scholars, political

personalities, and people who are acknowledged to have familiarity with the situation of the Kurds in Lebanon. These meetings were coupled with visits to the neighborhoods in Beirut where the Kurds reside. Furthermore, a flyer written in both Arabic and Kurmanji explaining the aim of the study and showing how people could participate was distributed during the *Norooz Feast* (the Persian New Year March 21, 2010), which is the Kurds' most important celebration in Lebanon.

Once the sourcing was done, the contacts were made, and the questionnaire was finalized, we set out to decide on the sampling of the population.

This survey was the basic source that provided most of our findings. The field survey was launched on 4 September and finished on 20 October 2010. In the course of it, we conducted face-to-face interviews with 164 subjects. In order to make sure that the survey targeted only those who were naturalized in 1994, respondents were selected while being controlled for the following variables: year of naturalization, age at naturalization, and voting registration in Beirut.

Due to insecurity in a country plagued by political violence, we needed to conform our research to the protocols proper to an "Environment of Insecurity"[55] (EOI), which means being prepared to call off the fieldwork when the risk becomes unacceptable (Romano 2006). Going into the field for this research, we were at an advantage because we knew the terrain, which helped us read non-tangible indicators in addition to monitoring the news for signs of increased risks. Our target sample was to survey 240 persons; in the event, due to the "Environment of Insecurity", we surveyed 164 persons. The lesser number was the result of the fact that we became increasingly alarmed by the environment of mounting tension and insecurity in the city of Beirut and the dangers encountered by our team. From the onset of the survey, members of the survey team were spat on, attacked with bottles of water and fire crackers by members of the Kurdish community. The team however insisted on continuing the work, emphasizing that the filling out of the questionnaire posed absolutely no risk to the respondent, and was a politically neutral gesture. We met an increasing number of rejections following the clashes that took place between *Hezbollah*[56] and the *Ahbash*[57] in Borj Abi Haidar neighborhood in Beirut, which resulted in several deaths and – most notably for our study -- included the death of a Kurdish young man who was the son of one of the Kurds' leading figures, and kin to the largest Kurdish family in the country. Furthermore, the political frictions in the country were heightened by an atmosphere of distrust against 'information seekers' following the dismantling of several Israeli intelligence networks. Coupled with the intensification of political rhetoric among Lebanon's competing political factions, the general environment became visibly risky for the field surveyors. Notwithstanding the discouraging environment, our survey was not called off until one of the surveyors was physically attacked and returned to the office with

[55] See Sirkeci, I. (2006) The Environment of Insecurity in Turkey and the Emigration of Turkish Kurds to Germany, New York: Edwin Mellen Press.
[56] Hezbollah is a militant Shiite organization that operates in Lebanon and aims at creating a fundamentalist Islamic state in Lebanon.
[57] The *Ahbash are* a Syrian-backed Sunni organization.

bruises, while others were threatened and were asked to leave. At this point, we had succeeded in having 177 questionnaires completed.

Despite these obstacles, the early piloting of the questionnaire yielded positive outcomes and increased our confidence that our research plan and the wide range of topics included in the study would permit an in-depth understanding of the social forces we targeted and help us attain the following objectives:

- A better comprehension of the socioeconomic situation associated with the naturalization of the Kurds in Lebanon;
- An enhanced understanding of the political participation of the Kurds in Lebanon; and
- A well-focused perception of the association between the socio-demographic, socio-economic characteristic features of the naturalized Kurds at the time of naturalization and their mobility 15 years later.

Our survey was the first to concentrate on the impact of naturalization in Lebanon, taking in the multiple dimensions of the quality of life of the naturalized both at the moment of naturalization and fifteen years afterwards. Our inquiry yielded answers to topics that included: motives for immigration, education, employment, patterns of self-identity on the individual level, and political behavior. A series of questions on demographic and individual backgrounds was also asked.

Because this survey is the first of its kind, *i.e.* to study the Kurds after naturalization, there were no preceding empirical studies to emulate. Available literature, mainly two MA theses in English and two books in Arabic were written either prior to the naturalization decree, which logically disqualified them, or after it, but not addressing the socioeconomic mobility of the community.[58] Our working hypothesis was that the naturalization of 1994 had a significant positive impact on the socio-economic mobility of the Kurds of Lebanon. The questionnaire and interviews described below were developed to test this hypothesis. Furthermore, experience with similar empirical surveys, targeting a specific group of the Lebanese population,[59] has illustrated that surveying can

[58] Lokman Meho (1995). The Dilemma of Social and Political Integration of Ethnoclass Groups within Pluralistic Societies: The case of the Kurds in Lebanon. Master's Thesis. Beirut: American University of Beirut; Farah Kawtharani (2003). The Interplay of Clientelism and Ethnic Identity in Pluralist States: The Case of the Kurdish Community in Lebanon. Master's thesis. Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 2003.
منذر الموصلي، *عرب وأكراد رؤية عربية ... للقضية التركية/ الاكراد في وكنهم القومي وفي الجوار العراقي–التركي–الايراني ... وفي سورية ولبنان*، دار العلم، الطبعة الثالثة، 1995؛ صلاح ابو شقرا، *الاكراد شعب المعاناة: نافذة على واقعهم في لبنان والعالم*، دار الهادي للطباعة والنشر والتوزيع، بيروت، لبنان، 1999.

[59] Guita Hourani and Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return: The Case of Lebanon Following the Summer 2006 War*, the Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM), Robert Schumann Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 2007, [http://www.carim.org/index.php?areaid=8&contentid=63]; Choghig Kasparian, 'Les Jeunes Libanais dans la Vague d'Émigration de 1992 à 2007', Presses de L'Université Saint-Joseph, Lebanon, 2009.

provide sound and useful results despite the absence of probability sampling, and that this approach increases the level of methodological reliability.

4.1.1.1 Methods

This section illustrates the sample of the study and discusses the methods used in data collection and analyses.

4.1.1.1.1 Sample

Given the scarcity of reliable demographic information about the Lebanese population, including the naturalized, the possibility of using probability sampling was ruled out. Furthermore, poor urban mapping particularly of Beirut, where the Kurdish population is largely located, made the decision to rule out probability sampling even more of a *de facto* decision. Instead, we chose a convenience sampling technique, requiring identification of probable Kurdish residential areas in Beirut (using a snowball approach). Surveyors who searched for Kurds in homes, shops, and neighborhoods reported that this method was sociologically interesting, as it allowed us to see the degree of interconnection of the Kurds and the extent to which the non-Kurdish population could easily identify Kurds in their neighborhoods. On the other hand, it also showed that the fear of denaturalization continues to hover over the naturalized, which in turn makes them reluctant to draw attention to themselves or to refer to other Kurds.

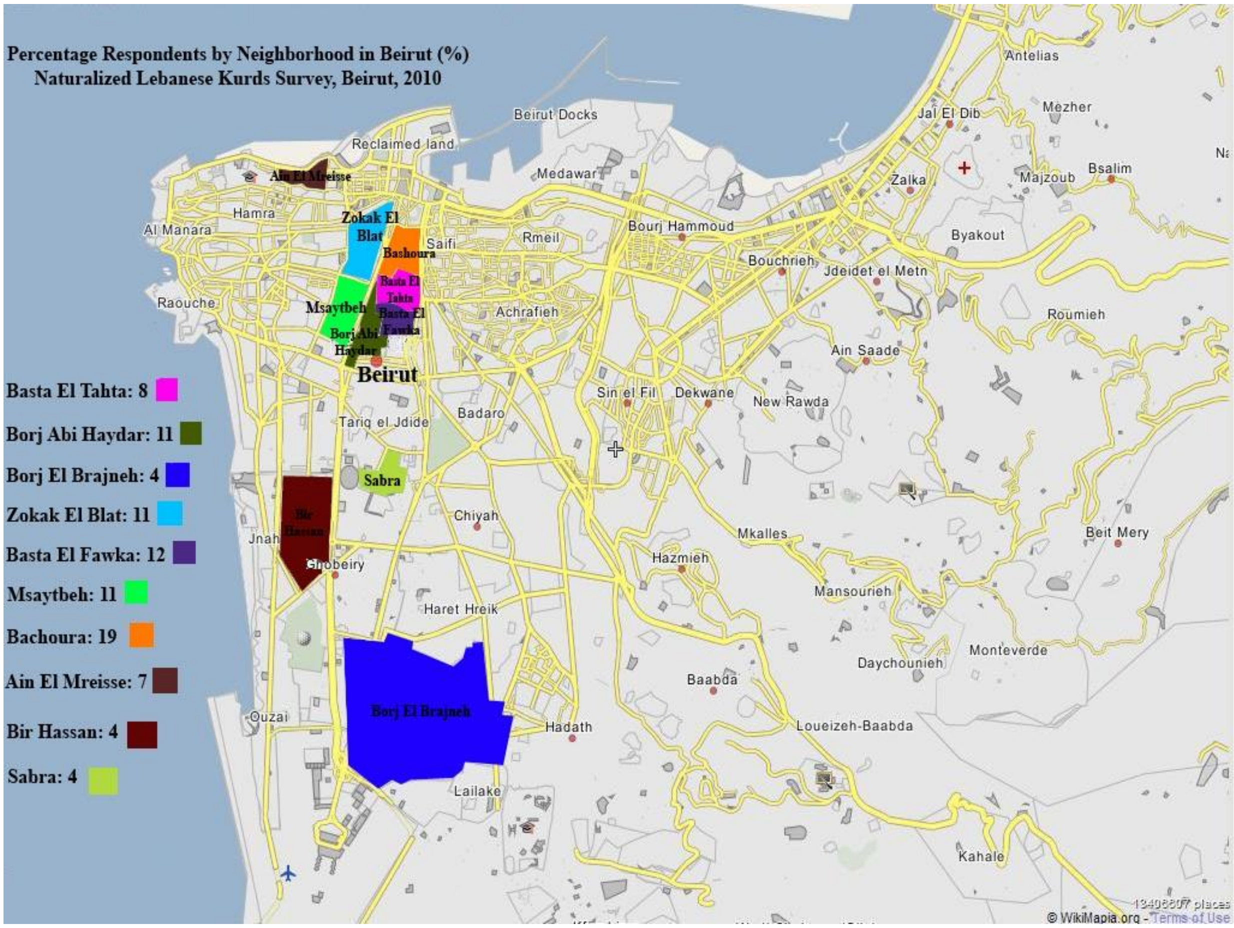


Exhibit 4. 1: Percentage of Respondents by Neighborhood in Beirut. ***Source: G. Hourani***

Our fieldwork consisted in conducting face-to-face interviews in the immigrants' homes, shops, and cafes. The interviews were conducted by Arabic-speaking interviewers who used an open-ended questionnaire written in Arabic. Bilingual speakers of Arabic and Kurmanji were on call to step in if and when needed.

In order to make sure that the interviewees were representative of the targeted group, the following variables were controlled for when respondents were identified: year of naturalization, age at naturalization, and district of residence in Lebanon. That is, the targeted group was selected to provide a selection of the Kurdish population by the above variables.

Residential areas were identified by Kurdish key informants, surveyors, and Kurdish organizations. Exhibit 4.1 shows distribution of the sample across the neighborhoods of Beirut.

Exhibit 4.2: Percentage Respondents by Neighborhood in Beirut (%)

Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010

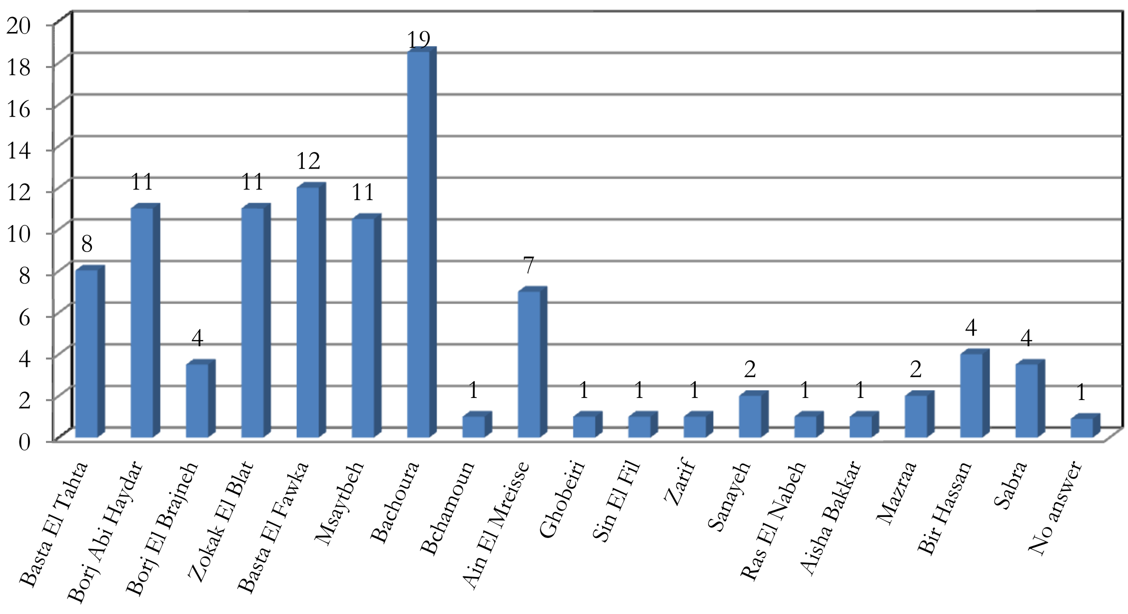


Exhibit 4.2 shows that the highest number of Kurdish respondents was in the Bachoura area, followed by Basta El Fawka, Zokak el Blat, Borj Abi Haydar, Msaytbeh and Ain el Mreisse. The lowest frequency of respondents is in Sin el Fil, Ras el Nabeh, Aisha Bakkar. The concentration of the sample in the above-mentioned areas of Beirut corresponds to the information provided in the Master thesis of Meho (1995: 46), Kawtharani (2003: 74),[60] and Abou Chakra (1999: 61-65). This means that the majority of the Kurds who resided in Beirut and these neighborhoods at the time of naturalization in 1994 continue mostly to live in the same areas 15 years after their naturalization.

4.1.1.1.2 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection. It consisted of 201 items. The majority of items were dichotomous, requiring either 'yes' or 'no' responses. Some items were put in five-point Likert scales.[61] The highest concentration of items was the socio-economic and the

[60] Kawtharani, Farah W. The Interplay of Clientelism and Ethnic Identity in Pluralist States: The Case of the Kurdish Community in Lebanon. Master's thesis. Beirut: The American University of Beirut, 2003 is another Master's thesis that we used to address all topics related to politics, elections, and clientelism. In fact, Kakhtarani's is the only publication that addresses these topics with regard to the Kurds. Her research was conducted around eight years after naturalization and following two parliamentary elections in the country in which the naturalized Kurds had the right to vote.

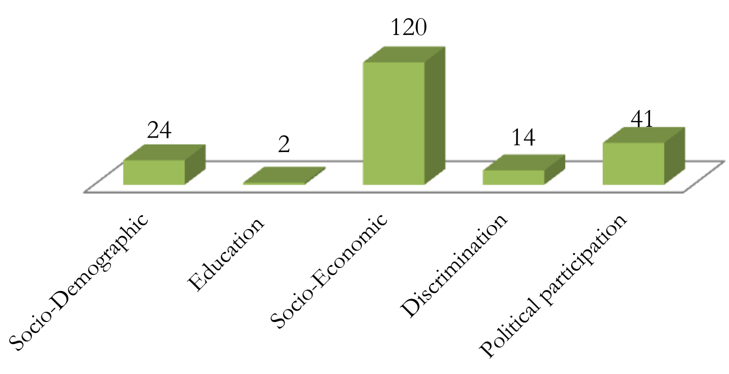
[61] Likert scale is an ordered and one-dimensional scale commonly used to measure attitude, providing a range of responses to a given question or statement from which respondents choose one option that is closest to their view.

political participation scales, reflecting the fact that our research was intended to profile the socio-economic mobility and political participation of the naturalized. On average, our respondents took about 48 minutes to complete the questionnaire, although some took as long as one hour and a half. Surveyors reported from the field that they had to repeat and explain many of the questions several times in order for the interviewees to understand the full meaning of the questions. Exhibit 4.3 shows the distribution of items across variables.

The reliability of the questionnaire items was measured by Cronbach alpha.[62] The values considered to show improvement in the individual's economic situation yielded a good alpha ($\alpha = .74$). The alpha dropped down to an acceptable level when it was a question of determining the issues that negatively influence the individual's position on the income ladder ($\alpha = .56$).

To be eligible to be interviewed for the study, the Kurdish subject had to be: a) between 15 and 52 years of age in 1994 (corresponding to 31 to 68 in 2010); b) naturalized in 1994 by the naturalization Decree No. 5247 of June 20, 1994; and c) officially registered to vote in Beirut.

Exhibit 4.3: Number of Items by Variable Type
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



Typically, there are 5 categories of response, from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with neutral central positions in between.

62 Cronbach's alpha is generally used to measure the reliability coefficient for Likert-Type Scales (*i.e.*, internal consistency), that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. A "high" value of alpha is often used (along with substantive arguments and possibly other statistical measures) as evidence that the items measure an underlying (or latent) construct [http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/faq/alpha.html].

Hundred percent (100%) of our respondents fit the profile for the age bracket, registration and voting in Beirut, and naturalization in 1994 through Decree No. 5247. The respondents were predominantly males (77%) as opposed to 23% females.

4.1.1.1.3 Biographical and In-Depth Interviews

Biographical and in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of 12 persons, who had been selected for their age, knowledge about migration trajectories, and their social capital within the community. The interview schedules were structured around two different semi-structured questionnaires: the in-depth questionnaire was altered to accommodate the position and knowledge of the interviewee. These questions sought to probe for information on the Kurds' migration trajectory, citizenship process, issues related to the history of the Kurds in Lebanon, the kind of problems they experienced in the country, integration in the Lebanese society, and their political participation. Informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews.

4.1.1.1.4 Data Management

Quantitative and qualitative data were received from field surveyors.

4.1.1.1.4.1 Quantitative data

A coding sheet was constructed prior to data entry. Each questionnaire was assigned a reference number to check for the accuracy of data entry.

4.1.1.1.4.2 Qualitative data

Interviewing data were coded thematically for analysis and interpretation.

4.1.1.1.5 Data analysis

Interviewing data were coded thematically for analysis and interpretation.

4.1.1.1.6 Data analysis

All questionnaire data were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 11.5). Prior to data analyses, frequency runs were performed to ensure that all data were entered correctly. Then, tests for outliers and extreme cases were conducted to ensure that such cases did not exist.

Data analysis covered the following tests: Cronbach alpha, frequency distribution and percentages, and descriptive statistics.

4.1.1.1.7 Reporting

Quantitative data are presented in tables, and pie and bar charts. A narrative approach is used to present and discuss qualitative data generated from interviews and from the literature.

4.1.1.2 Operational Field Measures

Fieldwork took place between September 2010 and October 2010. Ten surveyors (three men and seven women) administered the questionnaire for the study; two researchers conducted the biographical interviews; and, finally, two others conducted the expert interviews. All interviews and questionnaires were conducted directly by surveyors in the housing unit, shops, or offices of respondents. Before data collection, surveyors received extensive training by the Lebanese Emigration Research Center of Notre Dame University (LERC) on research design methods and fieldwork procedures. These surveyors were made aware of the field research intricacies and potential technical difficulties and limitations prevailing in Lebanon. In addition, panel and email discussions involving faculty members, LERC, surveyors, and external researchers were conducted to probe the validity of the questionnaire items and interview questions in relation to the aim of the project. A pilot study involving eleven Kurdish respondents was conducted to further refine the adequacy of our instruments – e.g., the questionnaire items and interview questions--, to determine the time needed to complete the questionnaires, and to identify logistical problems which might occur using proposed methods, as well as discover reactions of respondents to the questions asked in both interviews and questionnaires among others.

Owing to our continued monitoring of the political and security situation in Lebanon and our intuition that the political conflict in Lebanon and particularly in Beirut between the Shiites and the Sunnites was escalating, we decided to shorten the time and effort of piloting the questionnaires and instead to immediately launch the administering of the altered questionnaire, taking into consideration the reports from the surveyors who conducted the pilot. Consequently, the results from the pilot study were incorporated into the final versions of both the questionnaire and the interview schedule. In compliance with standard ethical practice, written consent was sought before conducting each interview or administering the questionnaire. Each interviewee was asked to read and sign the consent form that indicated the objectives of the survey. The surveyors assured the respondents both orally and in writing that the study would maintain the full anonymity of the respondents. The section that follows presents and discusses the survey results.

SECTION V- FIELD SURVEY: DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

A representation of the naturalized respondent's overall subjective evaluation of his or her socioeconomic mobility and political participation is provided by a set of questions that examined their situation at the time of naturalization and 15 years after, particularly in regard to their occupation, income, property ownership, their social stratification status, voting participation, and their attitude towards Kurdish special representation within the Lebanese sectarian system.

Since the possession of a nationality "is of both legal and practical relevance in accessing rights and services", not possessing a nationality "can have a severely detrimental impact on the lives of the individuals concerned" (van Waas 2010: 2). In the following pages, we will try to determine the impact of having or not having citizenship on the individuals' lives, including education, housing, employment, and other social dimensions.

As we have pointed out above, the components of this survey must be evaluated according to qualitative protocols due to lack of objective and reliable data, information and publications on income, status in the labor market, integration, mobility, and political participation by groups in Lebanon.

5.1.1 Immigration History

The immigration history of the Kurdish respondents covered the following variables: country of origin, immigration date, and reasons for immigrating.

5.1.1.1 Country of Origin

Our survey sample amounted to 164 subjects. Ninety percent of the surveyed were born in Lebanon while 10 percent were born in Turkey. In terms of their country of family origin, 94 % hailed from Turkey, 4% from Iraqi Kurdistan, less than 1% from Syria, and 1% did not answer. These results are commensurate with the findings of Meho (1995: 42), Kawtharani (2003: 62), and Abou Chakra (1999: 54-59).

5.1.1.2 Year of Immigration

22% of the respondents put the date of immigration of their family (or themselves) between 1930 and 1939, while an equal number (22%) did not know; 16% put the date between 1920 and 1929; 11% said 1960-1969; 10% responded 1950-1959 and similar percentage (10%) indicated an arrival between 1950-1959; 8.5% arrived between 1940-1949; 6% between 1910 and 1919; and 4.9% between 1970-1979.

Exhibit 5.1: Year of Immigration Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1910-1919	10	6
1920-1929	26	16
1930-1939	36	22
1940-1949	14	8
1950-1959	16	10
1960-1969	18	11
1970-1979	8	5
Don't know	36	22
Total	**164**	**100**

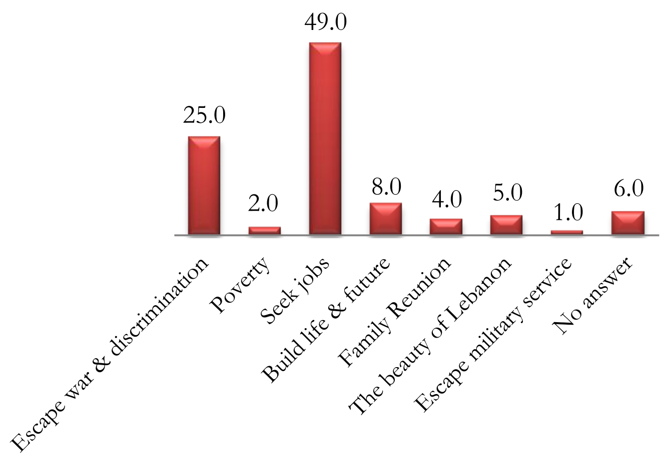
There is compatibility between our findings and the results of Meho (1995: 48), Kawtharani (2003:61), and Abou Chakra (1999: 59-61), as well as with the major historical events taking place in the region as described in the previous sections.

5.1.1.3 Reasons for Immigrating

Push and Pull immigration theory refers to the interplay of inducements (Push) and the attractions (Pull) that influence people to leave their country of origin to settle in another country. The inducements have their sources in the country of origin and the attractions in the country of destination. The push and pull factors vary from one person to another; however, the common denominator is the well-being of the immigrant and his family.

In our survey, some 49% of the respondents said that their or their ancestors' reason for immigrating to Lebanon was economic – specifically, to seek employment; 25% stated that escaping war and discrimination were the chief reasons for migrating to Lebanon. "Contrast to the Armenians who fled to protect their lives and their

Exhibit 5.2: Reasons for Family Migration (%)
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



physical safety," said R. F. "the Kurds came as economic immigrants fleeing bad economic and living conditions. They were told that Lebanon is the country of freedom and job opportunities."[63] Meho's findings indicate that in "the relative improvement in the living conditions of the Kurds in Lebanon, as well as the country's proximity to Kurdistan, played another important role in encouraging these new immigrants to choose Lebanon as their new home" (Meho 2002:1).

The reasons for immigrating to Lebanon indicated by our respondents correspond to the findings of Meho (1995: 18, 42-43), Kawtharani (2003: 155-156), and Abou Chakra (1999: 60-61). Furthermore, our biographical and in-depth interviews confirmed that the migration to Lebanon was generally driven by economic factors.[64]

5.1.1.4 Legal Status at Naturalization

5.1.1.4.1 Dual Citizenship

One hundred percent (100%) of the respondents affirmed that they were Lebanese nationals and that they acquired citizenship through the naturalization decree of 1994. When asked about whether they held another nationality, only twenty-nine persons or close to eighteen percent (17.7%) of the total number of respondents affirmed holding a citizenship other than Lebanese. Of these 29 persons, 24 held Turkish citizenship, one held Syrian citizenship and one held Iraqi citizenship. Three did not indicate the country of their dual nationality. The proportion of Kurds holding Turkish citizenship in this sample coincides with the findings of Ahmed (1995: 85). We should note here that Lebanon accepts the principle of dual citizenship.

5.1.1.4.2 Qayd al-Dars Identification Card

As stated earlier, this ID was introduced in 1962 and the majority of the stateless 'Kurds' were encouraged to obtain it.

In order to know how many of our respondents benefited from the 1994 naturalization decree to acquire the Lebanese citizenship, we asked our respondents whether they held a *Qayd al-Dars* ID. Out of our one hundred and sixty four respondents, 89% confirmed their holding of this ID, while 11% said that they held other types of legal documents. The results from our survey match the claims of Ahmed (1995: 85) and Meho (1995: 97-98).

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[63] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.
[64] Interviews with A. S. and B. M., who immigrated to Lebanon in 1930 and in 1925 respectively, confirmed that the immigration of the Kurds to Lebanon was for economic reasons. Interviews conducted in Lebanon on February 8, 2010 and February 11, 2010 respectively.

In his article entitled "The Kurds in Lebanon: a Social and Historical Overview", Meho wrote that "by the mid-1990s, fewer than 20% of Lebanon's Kurds had citizenship. Approximately 10% had no form of identity or were registered as Syrians or Palestinians. The remaining Kurds, over 70%, held Under Consideration ID cards [*Qayd al-Dars* IDs]" (Meho 2002: 4).

5.1.2 Socio-Demographic Data

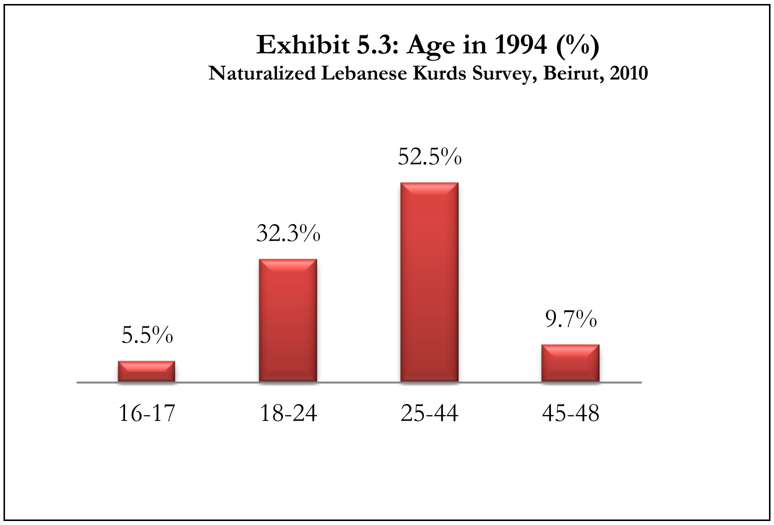
The socio-demographic data of the Kurdish respondents covered the following variables: country of birth, age, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, spoken language, and identity of the respondents.

5.1.2.1 Country of Birth

When asked about their birthplace, ninety-one percent (91%) of our respondents stated that they were born in Lebanon; nine percent (9%) responded that they were born in Turkey. This result matches the literature about the Kurds in Lebanon: it is thought that the majority was born in Lebanon, but is descendent of earlier immigrants who began arriving in Lebanon during the late 1920s (Meho 2002: 17).

5.1.2.2 Age in 1994

The mean age of respondents was 46 years, with a standard deviation of 9.5. Respondents' age ranged between 15 years old, our youngest respondent, to 64 years old, our oldest. 5.5% of the total number of the respondents was below the age of 17 at the time of naturalization, 32% were between the ages of 18 and 24, 52.5% were between 25 and 44, and 10% were between 45 and 64. The highest distribution of respondents across age groups was in the 18-24 and 25-44 age categories, decreasing as they get younger (below 18) or older (above 45).



5.1.2.3 Gender

Although we made a special effort to include women in our survey, we found that this was difficult. Men were less reluctant to be surveyed than women. Furthermore, reports from the field indicated that women were assertive in preventing their family members from responding to our questionnaire, and at times aggressive with the surveyors. On several occasions these women stated their suspicions about the survey, saying that they are now Lebanese (indicative of the suspicion that the survey was somehow a step in some putative de-naturalization project), that they had no wish to answer any questions, and that finally they had answered enough questions when they were not citizens. Consequently 77% of the interviewees were males *versus* 23% females.

Our experience seems to be the norm. Meho, for instance, was only able to have 32% of his 308 sample as women (Meho 1995: 88).

5.1.2.4 Marital Status

An overwhelming majority of respondents were married (69%), divorced, separated or widowed (14%), while 17% were single.

5.1.2.5 Religious Affiliation

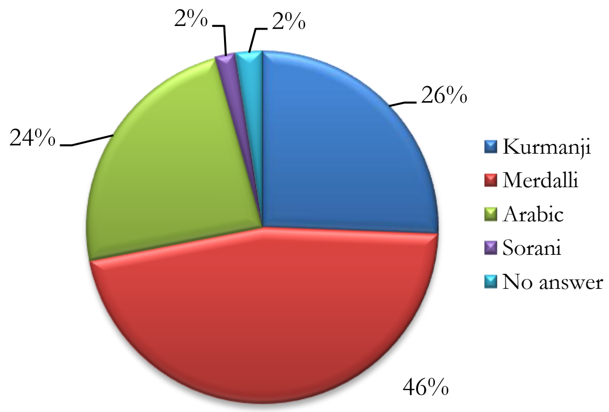
Our study showed that the respondents identified themselves overwhelmingly as Sunnis (95%), with one percent identifying simply as Muslim, 2% failing to answer, and 2% refraining from answering.

The findings of our fieldwork related to the religious affiliation of the Kurds of Lebanon correspond with the literature on the Kurds in general and on the Kurds of Lebanon in particular (Meho 1995: 44; Abou Chakra 1999: 69).

5.1.2.6 Spoken Language

The spoken languages of the respondents are shown in the Exhibit below and reflect the fact that the 'Kurds' in Lebanon are divided into two groups distinguished by their languages – Kurdish dialects (Kurmanji) and Arabic dialect (*Merdalli-Muhallami*).

Exhibit 5.4: Spoken Language (%)
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



Our survey results indicate that the majority, or 46%, specified *Merdalli -Muhallami* as their spoken language, 26% designated Kurmanji, 24% indicated Arabic, 2% Sorani,[65] and 2% failed to answer. The language distribution confirms what the literature had claimed: almost a third of those who are considered 'Kurds' in Lebanon are ethnically Kurds and speak Kurmanji, while two-thirds consider themselves ethnically Arabs and speak *Merdalli-Muhallami*.

The results obtained from this question corresponds to Abou Chakra's finding, that only 20% of his sample of 256 households spoke Kurmanji (Abou Chakra 1999: 56-57).

Lebanon values its multicultural composition and guarantees freedom of speech and adheres to an unwritten covenant to protect its cultural diversity. Hence, the speaking, publishing (be they books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets), using social media, or listening to broadcast media in Kurmanji or Muhallami are not restricted nor prohibited; however, the absence of schools or programs that teach Kurmanji is a cause of community concern that the next generation will gradual lose it understanding of its ethnic tongue.[66]

[65] Sorani is spoken by the Kurds of Iraq.
[66] N. M. and L. M. of one of the Kurds' cultural organizations interviews conducted on December 13, 2009 in Beirut.

Jordan also has a diverse population that includes a small enclave of ethnic Kurds. Recent research on this group found that the Kurdish language as spoken among this group has "remarkably declined among Jordanian Kurds to less than 20 percent…" and that "the loss of Kurdish… is greater in reading and writing skills than in speaking and listening" (Al-Khatib and Al-Ali 2010: 19). The study refers to "the positive attitude" of the Jordanian Kurds "toward Arabic language and culture" and also to the fact "that there does not seem to be enough motivation at the community level to do what needs to be done to revive the language or even to keep it from being lost" (Al-Khatib and Al-Ali 2010: 32). Syria, too, contains an enclave of Kurds, but unlike Lebanon and Jordan, Syria has imposed restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language in schools and in public places, as well as prohibition on printing or issuing newspapers and periodicals in Kurmanji (Norwegian Landinfo 2010: 6). Thus, information on Kurdish language use is much harder to obtain.

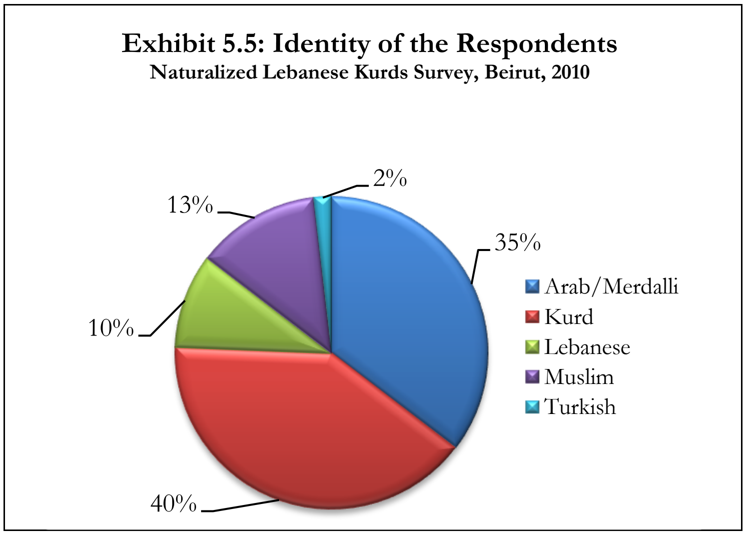
5.1.2.7 Identity

As we indicated earlier, we asked our respondents to self-identify, believing that "Since ethnic identity is a social construct; we feel that individual self-identification is the most appropriate means of measurement…" (Stephan and Stephan 2000: 547). We discovered that "Kurdish" was still the category that the majority identified with. 40% of the respondents identified themselves as Kurds, 35% said *Merdalli-Muhallami*, 10% identified themselves as Lebanese, 13% preferred the category Muslim, and 2% chose Turk. These numbers reveal the sub-ethnic groups within the community, and imply that to be a 'Kurd' in the pre-naturalization era might have been a stronger identifying marker, perhaps as because it clarified one's social position while negotiating access to citizenship in Lebanon.

The data show also that the community identifies itself more in terms of ethnicity than nationality or religion. The data also indicate that about twelve percent[67] (12%) of those who did not indicate a Kurdish language as their language still claimed Kurdishness as their identity.

The revelation that there is sub-ethnic group self-identification among the Kurds in the post-naturalization era shows that ethnicity is not static but changes over time as a result of efforts to negotiate those contradictions and tensions," (Schultz 1994:13). Cultural Kurdishness as defined by Kurdish lineage and the adherence to cultural practices is also maintained, in spite of official discouragement, in Syria (Tejel 2009: 103).

[67] The twelve percent was derived from adding 26% Kurmanji and 2% Sorani which equaled 28% and subtracting the result from 40% which is the total number of those who claimed Kurdish identity.



The results also suggest that individuals are more ready to describe themselves firstly in terms of ethnic identifiers rather than religious or national ones. Since identity refers to an individual's self-perception in relation to others and to the world, it is reflective in nature; such self-perception is manifested externally in relation to society and experience through various modes of expression (Giddens 1991: 52-53). Therefore, individuals manifest their identity in multiple notions of self and pronounce it in various memberships and associations, depending on the circumstances. When asked about their identity, those who fall officially under the category of 'Kurds' in Lebanon did emphasize their belonging as an individual to some specific ethnicity, judging themselves as closer or further away from the Kurdish identity. We have recorded in our fieldwork that when asked whether the person we were administering the questionnaire to or interviewing whether they identified themselves as Kurds or not, the *Merdalli-Muhallami* interviewees affirmed that they neither speak nor understand a word of the Kurdish language. Kreyenbroek received the same reaction, as recorded in his chapter entitled "On the Kurdish Language", in which he wrote: "When the identity of a people is in question, however, language can become a focus for nationalist sentiments." (Kreyenbroek 1992: 68)

The results for this question are quite revealing and indicative when compared with Meho's research conducted prior to the naturalization of 1994. His results show that 20% self-identified as Kurds, 54% as Lebanese-Kurds, 20% regarded themselves as Muslims, 4% as Lebanese, 3% as Lebanese of Kurdish origins (Meho 1995: 132-133).

It is interesting to compare pre-naturalization and post-naturalization self-identification in this case, as the comparison reveals that, in the pre-naturalization era, the interviewed Kurds strongly tended to claim being Lebanese-Kurds (perhaps to obtain their rights as Lebanese, as part of the strategy behind demanding Lebanese citizenship), while in post-naturalization, the majority of the respondents reverted to their Kurdish or *Merdalli-Muhallami* identities. It is not that the two groups were not cognizant of their respective distinctiveness, but rather that, in the post-naturalization era, they had the freedom "to determine their identity as they may wish" (Eagleton 1990: 30) and felt liberated from the labeling that bundled them together.

In her dissertation on the immigration and social construction of identity of the Garifuna people (Black Caribs) in the United States, DeFay wrote that the Garifunian immigrants she interviewed identified "themselves differently depending on the situation and context" (DeFay 2004: 25). This is a social effect of the processes at work in the pre- and post-integration situations in the host society, where self-identification involves feelings that are influenced by the way situations are framed and varied according to time, place and circumstances (Zimmermann et al. 2006: 1).

5.1.3 Socioeconomic Situation of the Respondents at the Time of Naturalization and 15 Years After

This section compares the socioeconomic situation of the respondents at the time of naturalization and fifteen years after, *i.e.* in 2010. Here we turn to patterns of *intragenerational* social mobility, defined as the individual's social position deriving from such determining factors as the respondents' job, salary, education, social status, etc. at the time of naturalization and then fifteen years later. It seems self-evident that the naturalized would have had more scope to establish themselves socioeconomically within Lebanese society if they had recognized political rights, in contrast to the period before naturalization.

The section will focus on the attributes of the processes of status attainment and socioeconomic mobility as they are articulated within Lebanese society collectively. We can assume as a general rule that those who grew up in Lebanon will have greater job opportunities due to their knowledge of labor markets and job-search strategies, as well as greater familiarity with local customs and social networks, compared with immigrants who were not raised or spent a long time in Lebanon. The answers to this part of the survey are meant to reflect the following variables: Education, employment, income, occupation, housing, children's future, and subjective social status, among others.

We are using three general types of social mobility as defined by the following Exhibit:

Exhibit 5.6: Three General Types of Social Mobility
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010

1. *Intragenerational* Mobility	Comparing social status at the time of naturalization and 15-years later
2. Occupation and Income Mobility	Comparing occupation and income at the time of naturalization and 15-years later
3. Subjective Social Status (SSS)	Comparing SSS at the time of naturalization and 15-years later

5.1.3.1 Educational Profile

This variable is aimed at establishing the respondent's educational level at the time of naturalization as compared to fifteen years later, which should be a good proxy for one of the key advantages of acquiring citizenship. It should be noted here that holders of *Qayd el-Dars* cards and their children did not have free access to schools beyond elementary education.[68] Limited or no access to public higher education affects the socioeconomic mobility of future generations of this group and similar groups. It has been reported by van Waas that the non-citizens in the United Arab Emirates "cannot follow education beyond high school," while the Bidoon in Kuwait and stateless Kurds in Syria have "problems accessing secondary school as well as entering university" (van Waas 2010: 27).

What the following Exhibit shows is the level of education of the total number of respondents at the time of naturalization and fifteen years after, from which it can be seen that there was a significant increase in the vocational/technical education from zero to 11.5%. There was also an increase, although slight, in the percentage of those who attended tertiary level education from 2% to 4.5%, as well as in the percentages of those who attended elementary schools.

Meho's survey question concerning lack of citizenship on the level of education found that those of his sample who were holders of *Qayd al-Dars* Identification Cards had only 8% tertiary education, 23% high school and 69% elementary or home-base level education. On the other hand, Meho found that those who were naturalized prior to 1994 in his sample had 14% tertiary education, 52% high school and 34% elementary or home-base level education.

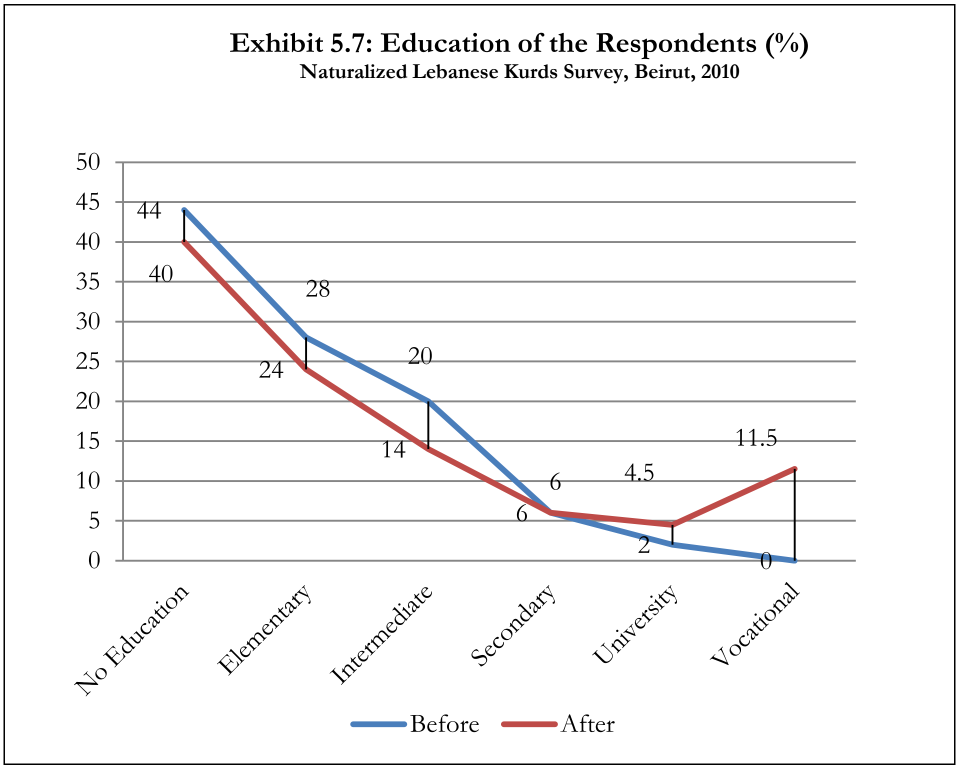
Meho concluded that citizenship "leads to higher levels of education among the Kurds in Lebanon" (Meho 1995: 82). However, our results did not reflect much difference in terms of education in the lives of the naturalized 15 years after naturalization. This may be due to their age (for example, if they were too old, or felt too old, to take secondary education courses), or to other factors, such as poverty. In any case, it would be interesting to assess the educational attainment of the 1994 naturalized children, as well as the children of the naturalized.

In our interview with S. F. of the Future Movement, he relayed, based on his experience with them, that "the Kurds prioritize three things: self employment, owning properties, and investing in gold." He further added that in general the Kurds in Lebanon do not invest in the education of their children; they consider them as an economic resource and as such they prefer that their children work.[69] In his book *The Kurds: a Concise Handbook*, Izady wrote that "in the extreme eastern provinces of Turkey…, most Kurdish parents were observed to insist on teaching their children only Kurdish, and had less desire to acquire formal education for them." He discerned

[68] Interview conducted with Gh. Kh. A member of one of the Kurdish political parties in Lebanon on February 2, 2010 in Beirut.

[69] Interview conducted in Beirut at one of the Future Movement's offices on August 26, 2010.

that "lack of standard and up-to-date education has in turn inhibited progress in minority home regions and prolonged the group's socioeconomically underprivileged and non-integrated position." (Izady 1992: 109) A Similar situation is taking place among the Lebanese Kurds in Essen in Germany, where education is taking a back seat in many of the households despite the fact that even tertiary education is free (Gesemann 2006a) But these findings are not universal among the Kurds, for the second generation immigrant Kurds in Sweden, where education is also free, have been placing great value on learning (Bartl 2009).



In today's world, education has become an increasingly important factor, on the individual level, in determining career choice, job attainment, and social class position and destination. It has also become more of a concern for the state as nations compete in a global economic landscape that prioritizes the knowledge economy and human capital. These macro-factors impinge on an individual's opportunities and thus economic mobility: to progress in today's world, education has become indispensable and this has influenced people's appreciation of education.

In Lebanon education and emigration were the main driving factors that caused changes in class structure and produced vertical social mobility (Khuri 1969: 31). When analyzing those factors that propel positive socio-economic mobility, certainly education has to be considered as well as citizenship. Thus, our finding indicates one significant limitation of the positive effect of naturalization, in as much as it has not produced a marked tendency to acquire more education. It seems clear that if the Kurds of Lebanon aspire for a better livelihood in the future, they will have to prioritize the education of their children.

5.1.3.2 Economic Profile at the Time of Naturalization and 15 Year After

The economic profile covered information about the sources of income of the Kurdish population subject of our study at the time of naturalization and 15 years after. The profile also included information on the following.

5.1.3.2.1 Economic Profile

The economic profile covered information about the sources of income of the respondents at the time of naturalization and 15 years after to determine changes in the source of income as a consequence of the acquired citizenship. Respondents were asked to disclose their source of income by choosing from a list of possible answers (multiple choices).

5.1.3.2.1.1 Occupation

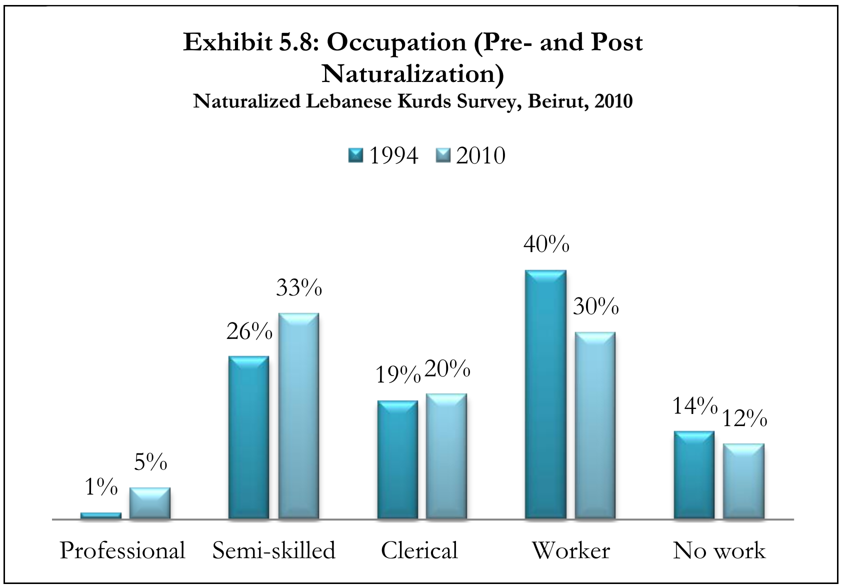


Exhibit 5.8 shows that the main occupation of the respondents in pre-naturalization were working as day laborers (40%), followed by technical occupations (e.g. Electrician, Plumber, Mechanic, etc.), (26%) and regular employment (19%). The smallest source of income (1%) was from professional positions. The percentages in post-naturalization were somewhat different. The data shows that there was an increase of 7% in the semi-skilled jobs and 4% in the professional jobs and a drop of 10% in the percentage of those who were earning their living from day labor. However, there was no significant change in the percentage of unemployment pre- or post-naturalization that could be related to the business cycle, or in many cases to personal and/or situational reasons. Unemployment rates in Lebanon are high among the poor, who are in their majority unskilled workers.[70] The unemployment rate

[70] See UNDP Lebanon, *What we do / Social and Local Development*, [http://www.undp.org.lb/WhatWeDo/poverty.cfm].

in Lebanon has been ranging from 12% in 1995, 20% in 2006, to 10% in 2010,[71] depending on the political and physical insecurities in the country and the global economic climate.[72]

Although slight improvement was noted, our survey findings are largely similar to Meho's results in terms of the type of jobs the respondents held at the time of naturalization in 1994. Meho found that only 2% of those who had *Qayd al-Dars* card were professionals, 15% skilled, 61% day laborer, and 21% did not work (Meho 1995: 89).

The Kurds of Lebanon who were holders of *Qayd el-Dars* card did not have full citizenship rights and as such they had practically no access to public sector jobs, including the army, since to serve in the army a person must have been a Lebanese citizen for more ten years. This has prevented the Kurds from accessing the sector that represents a significant source of employment and a steady income even during insecurity in the country.

5.1.3.2.1.2 Source of Income

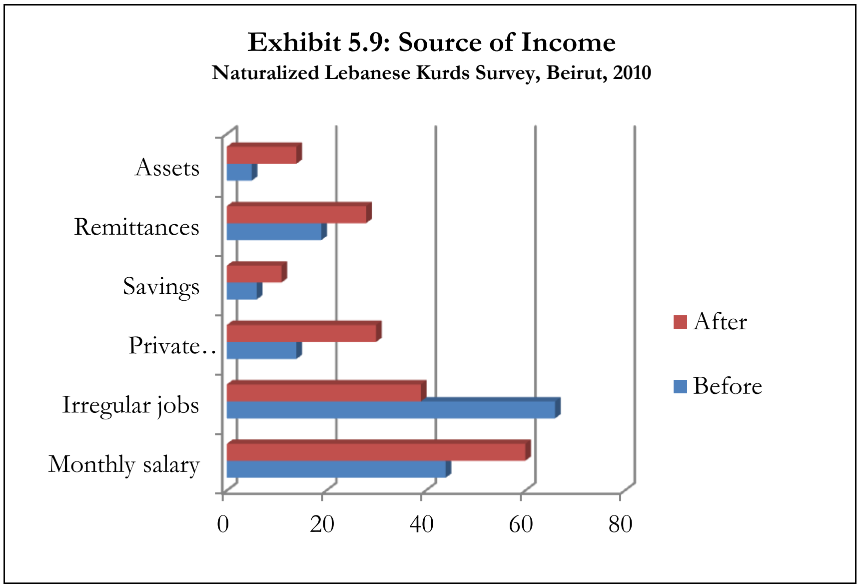
One basic index of socio-economic mobility is changes in employment. In our study, we asked about the status of the respondents' job prior to naturalization and the status of their current job.

Exhibit 5.9 below shows the different patterns of income described by the respondents. The highest sources of income at the time of naturalization were earnings from irregular jobs followed by remuneration from fixed monthly salary and remittances. The same Exhibit shows that, after fifteen years of naturalization, there was a sizable increase in the number of those who were earning their livelihood from a fixed monthly salary and a decrease in those who were relying on wages from irregular jobs, which strongly indicates a relation.

In terms of variation, we witnessed 53% increase in the fixed monthly income and a decrease of 45% in earnings from irregular jobs, a 43% increase in earnings from private businesses, and a 75% increase in earnings from assets.

[71] See Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Social Affairs, *Al-Taqrir al-Watani ila al-Qima al-Alamiyyah li-Tanmiah al-Ijtimaiyya* (The National Report to the International Summit for Social Development), Beirut, February 1995 and IndexMundi, Lebanon Unemployment Rate, 2003-2010, [http://www.indexmundi.com/lebanon/unemployment_rate.html].

[72] See Guita Hourani and Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return: The Case of Lebanon following the summer 2006 War,* the Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM), [http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/7986].



Increase in income from private businesses might be due to rights associated with naturalization, which brings with it easier access to loans, while the increase in remittances received is probably due to two reasons -- a rise in emigration commensurate with the increase in outflow migration from Lebanon between 1992 and 2007 which reached 466 000 person (Kasparian 2009: 8) as well as an increase in the inflow of remittances for the same period from two billion US Dollars to close to six billion.[73]

Remittances are considered to be a substitute for home earnings (Barham and Stephen Boucher 1998: 308). In Lebanon remittances constitute an important source of income, due to the out-migration of Lebanese to often more economically developed countries and the consequent inflow of money. Gross remittance inflows to Lebanon "amounted to an estimated 20 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2008, making the country one of the largest recipients of remittances as a share of GDP in the world" (Abdih et al. 2009: 8). Remittances sent to Lebanon "are mainly used for household consumption (housing, durable goods, everyday expenses, education and health care); a part of the remittances goes into savings, and a smaller part goes into job-creating investment in the retail and services sectors." (Hourani 2007: 6)

5.1.3.2.1.3 Aid from Family, Friends, and Organizations

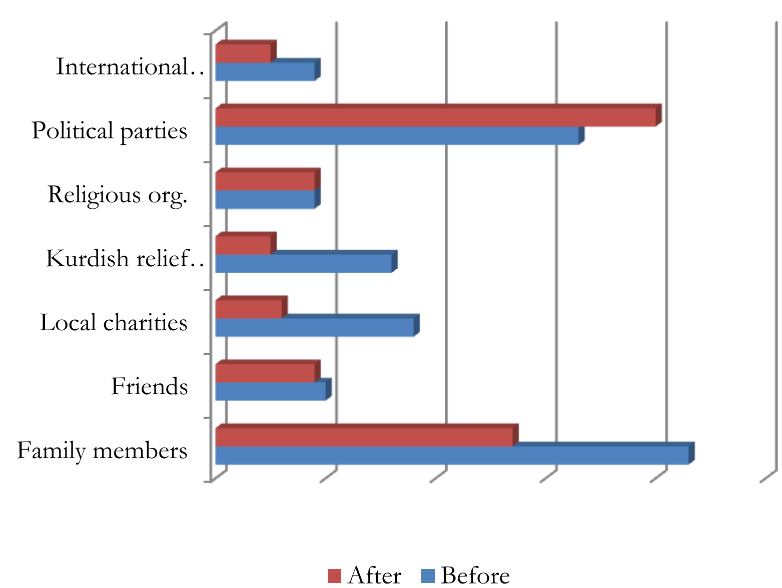
Relying on family members living within Lebanon was the largest source of assistance from pre-naturalization, followed by assistance from political parties and local charities. Curiously, family, friends, local and Kurdish charities and international organizations assistance all decreased post-naturalization, perhaps because its place was taken by increased earnings plus the increase we observed in the assistance from political parties, which became the main source of aid following naturalization.

[73] Migration Policy Institute, *Remittances Profile: Lebanon,* 2010, [http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/remittances/Lebanon.pdf].

In reading Exhibit 5.10, we can see that there was a sharp decrease in the reliance on family support in the country, and a sharp decline in aid coming from local and Kurdish charitable, and international institutions, but a significant increase of 21% of aid from political parties. The shift to political parties, rather than the state, for social welfare maintenance is not surprising -- the inadequate performance of the Lebanese State institutions produces a gap that allows this informal sector of services to develop between politicians and citizens whereby "individuals have had to obtain services and resources through informal and personal networks" (Joseph 1978: 63). As such this patron-client relationship is held together by a web of transactional relations, where all types of services are distributed to the clients in exchange for political loyalty. This loyalty is cashed in by the patrons during elections (Hamzeh 2001).

Exhibit 5.10: Aid

Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



It may seem puzzling that, although membership in political parties (Kurdish or Lebanese) is practically non-existent if we go by the respondents themselves, yet there is an important reliance on political parties' assistance. This could mean simply signify that respondents distinguish between their preferred political affiliation, if any, and their occasional reliance on the strong political networking by the parties. The latter doesn't loom large with the respondents when asked about political party activity.

The findings are commensurate with Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous's claim political parties target the newly naturalized, among them the Kurds, for assistance in return for their votes (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011). It also supports Kawtharani's claim of a clientelist mentality among the Kurds (Kawtharani 2003). The picture of assistance is explained, in part, by a recent study by Cammett and Issar in which they find that the Muslim Sunni *Al Mustaqbal* (the Future Movement) party operates large welfare organizations and programs and renders an array of services as its "political mobilization strategies" (Cammett and Issar 2010: 415).

5.1.3.2.1.4 Level of Income in US Dollars

Exhibit 5.11, showing income in Lebanese Pounds at the time of naturalization indicates that a majority of our respondents (74% of 161 respondents) were earning below L. P.500,000 in 1994, an equivalent of $289 at the 1994 exchange rate of L. P.1,730 for one dollar. The post-naturalization earnings compared favorably, showing that the majority (58% of 134 respondents) indicated that they are earning between L. P.500,000 and L. P. 1,000,000, an equivalent of $332 and $663 respectively at the 2010 exchange rate of L. P.1,507 for a dollar. The earnings of this study's respondents were not below the minimum wage of their Lebanese counterparts, which was set by the government of Lebanon at $200 US dollars for most of the nineties and at $333 US dollar after 2008.[74]

The results of this question are consistent with the information provided by the respondents regarding the change of their source of income, as they moved, generally, from irregular jobs in pre-naturalization to a more steady income in post-naturalization.

Before examining Exhibits 5.11 and 5.12, it should be noted that throughout the 1990s and until 2008, the minimum wage in Lebanon was $200 (L. P.300,000), which was increased in 2008 to $333 (L. P. 500,000) (Ministry of Finance 2010: 11). Accordingly when we examine the two exhibits below we can see that in terms of income, the respondents were not usually far above the minimum wage at the time of naturalization. We clearly note that the segment of this population that earned less than approximately $290 per month at the time of naturalization shrunk from 74% to 10% in the post-naturalization period, and that those who were making above $290 and up to $578 almost tripled from 23% to 58%. Those who earned between $600 and $995 increased from 2% to 29% in the post-naturalization era. The respondents have subjectively indicated their income pre- and post-naturalization with a clear shift benefiting the earning brackets between $300 and $663 and between $663 and $995.

[74] See Striking Back: Unions and New Protest Movements Took to the Streets in 2008, *Now Lebanon,* January 3, 2009, [http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=73296].

Exhibit 5.11: Pre-Naturalization Income in % (in 1994 Exchange Rate)
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010

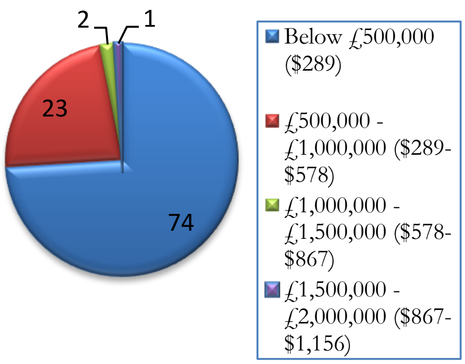
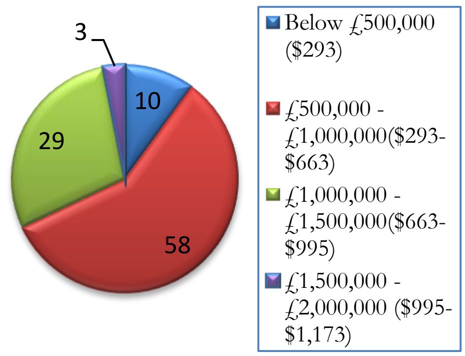


Exhibit 5.12: Post-Naturalization Income in % (in 2010 Exchange Rate)
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



Meho's findings were somewhat different from ours. Of those who held *Qayd al-Dars* cards in Meho's survey, 39% earned less than $300, 50% earned between $300 and $599, 9% earned between $600 and $1,000, and only 2% were making above $1,000. The disparity between our respondents' lower income and Meho's higher income may be explained by the availability of jobs and high earnings during the massive reconstruction of Beirut, which was supplemented by salaries that continued to be paid by several militia organizations to persons affiliated with them.

In his research, Don J. DeVoretz found that given "the anticipated access to a wider labour market post-naturalization, those immigrants who become citizens will have higher incomes" (DeVoretz 2009: 3). In other words, following naturalization, barriers to certain jobs and sectors are removed and the new citizen gains access to higher paying public sector and union jobs, among others.

We should keep in mind that occupation and earnings are also conditioned by the naturalized person's own human capital, which is an enormously important determinant of economic status. Disparities in human capital – skills and education - cause disparity in earnings not only between the naturalized and the native-born, but also among the naturalized themselves.

5.1.3.2.1.5 Residence Ownership Rate

Of the 164 respondents, 8 persons had houses prior to naturalization *versus* 29 after naturalization, while 2 had apartments at naturalization *versus* 36 after. In other words, 65

persons bought residence after naturalization. The increase in housing ownership may further be related to the fact that some of the Kurds were compensated in early 1990s for vacating properties they occupied during the war. As a result "many of these families were able to buy private residences with the received money" (Abou Chakra 1999: 143).

Although the increase in home or apartment ownership is not sizeable, it is still significant when we put it in the broader picture of housing in Beirut, a market in which affordable housing is rare. Since the end of the Civil War, the market value of properties in Beirut has been increasing. Even during downturn periods the prices in Beirut were still beyond the means of the low-income portion of the population. These external factors must also be considered when taking account of housing ownership trends. Even as the migrants were being naturalized in 1994, the Lebanese Company for Reconstruction & Development (SOLIDERE) was also being established, which was given a mandate to rebuild and redevelop the Beirut Central District after the ravages of the war. This resulted in unlocking the enormous interest in the market by Gulf investors, plus increased demand by Lebanese expatriates for residential and non-residential properties, all of which significantly raised prices. Although prices during political unrests or armed conflicts stagnated, they did not drop (Nahas 2008).

Prices for real estate soared in all the country over the fifteen years we are examining. Consequently even shabby apartments, rundown buildings and land in the depth of a valley or the top of a hill far from the city, once considered low market grade investment, became too high-priced for the low income segments of the population, which includes most of the Kurds (The Lebanese Real Estate Sector 2008). This situation, which continues to worsen, is coupled with a lack of any government housing policy especially for the low income population. Housing loans whether from the Public Housing Institute (PHI) or from private banks remain beyond the means of the low income borrowers. (Nash 2009).

Based on biographical and stakeholders interviews with members of the Kurdish community, most who had properties prior to naturalization possessed them in the names of Lebanese citizens, Kurds or other acquaintances, because as holders of *Qayd el-Dars* cards they were not eligible to own properties in Lebanon. Lack of access to property rights by non-nationals is common in countries in the Middle East. Non-citizens in the United Arab Emirates and in Kuwait for example suffer from similar prohibitions.[75] Such prohibitions particularly encroach on the access of non-nationals to housing (van Wass 2010: 23). Additionally, in Lebanon citizens

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[75] See Stateless People in the United Arab Emirates: More duties and fewer rights, 2010, Acceptance International Spreading Human Understanding- Harmony Out of Diversity London, England, [http://www.shuhood.com/en/news/3060.html] and Khalid Al-Shammari, "Stateless" Citizens Issue Remains Controversial in Kuwait, Al-Shorfa.com, 2010, [http://www.al-shorfa.com/cocoon/meii/xhtml/en_GB/features/meii/features/main/2010/05/18/feature-02].

are able to apply for housing loans from for government or commercial banks, which is, among other things, a strong inducement for naturalization.

5.1.3.2.1.6 Having a Bank Account

The results indicate that only 15 of the total 164 respondents had bank accounts at the time of naturalization, while, post-naturalization, this number almost tripled to 43.

Still, even after naturalization, the majority remain "unbanked". The lack of access to financial institutions has ramifications throughout an individual's economic life; one fails then to establish a credit history, which in turn denies one the ability to take out a mortgage to buy a house or take other kinds of loans, not to speak of paying for tuition for one's children, or purchasing items by installment. It also indicates an economy hitched to pawn shops and check-cashing businesses, which charge exorbitant interest and fees, and the risks attendant upon holding large amounts of cash at one's place of residence. The results might also indicate that the newly naturalized, who are now entering the formal system of the country, lack either banking/financial education or don't feel comfortable or confident using banks.

We should not overlook the importance of appropriate personal documentation, whose absence can cause an array of problems including "preventing a person from opening a bank account" (van Waas 2010: 22). Sometimes even with proper identification, people who are considered non-citizens may be prohibited from opening a bank account, as is the situation for the Kurds in Syria (van Waas 2010: 25).

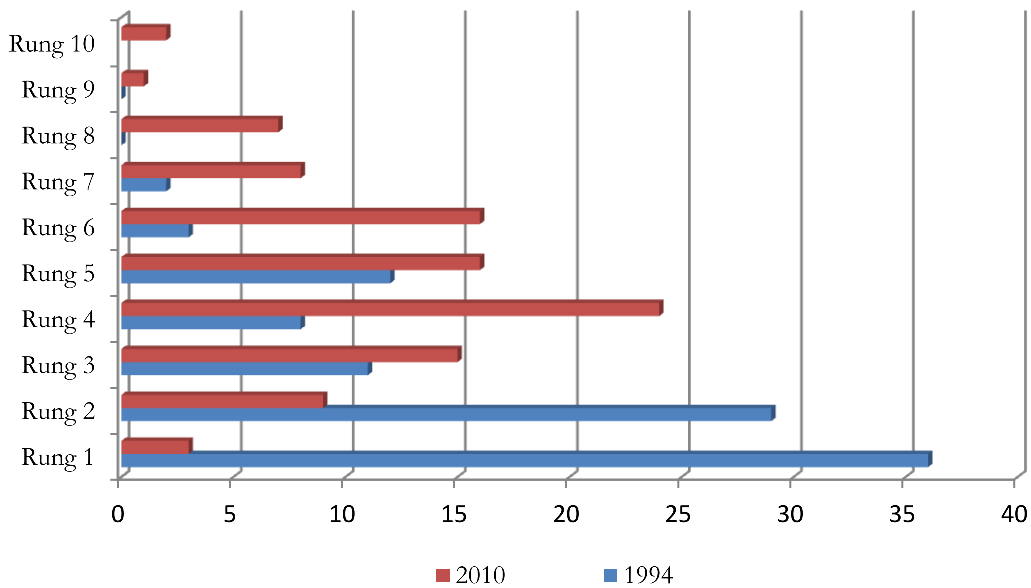
5.1.3.2.1.7 Subjective Social Status (SSS): MacArthur's Social Ladder

We have opted to use the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (SSS), which consists of a visual scale in the form of a ladder formed of ten rungs (see MacArthur SSS Ladder in Appendix II). We juxtaposed two identical ladders and asked the respondents to point out where they stood at the time of naturalization and where they stand fifteen years after (*i.e.* in 2010). We repeated to each respondent the same definition of subjective social status before we asked him/her to place him/herself on either of the two ladders. For the purpose of this study, we adopted the following definition of SSS: Subjective social status reflects an individual's perception of her/his relative position in the social hierarchy.

One scale rating perceives status within a country, and another rating perceives status within the community, where "community" is defined by the individual (Adler et al., 2000). Directions for the country scale read:

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in Lebanon. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off -- those who have the most education and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off -- who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no jobs. The higher up one is on this ladder, the closer one is to the people at the very top, the lower one is the closer one is to the people at the bottom.

Exhibit 5.13: Subjective Social Status: MacArthur's Social Ladder
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



The survey asked the naturalized to express their own perceptions of their status in comparison to other Lebanese. Using the ten-rung MacArthur ladder, respondents pointed to their class status with the higher level rungs indicating increased status and the lower level rungs indicating decreased status (see MacArthur SSS Ladder in Appendix II).

Exhibit 5.13 reveals that participants perceived considerable upward subjective class mobility during their 15 years after naturalization. Respondents rated their current social class as significantly higher than their social class at the time of naturalization.

Exhibit 5.13 clearly shows that, at naturalization, most respondents identified with the first three rungs, *i.e.* the bottom of the ladder, that is, the category of those who "have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no jobs." The Exhibit also shows that there was a substantial shift from the first three rungs to the 4th, 5th and 6th rungs fifteen years after naturalization, which reflects the feeling among respondents that they have experienced upward

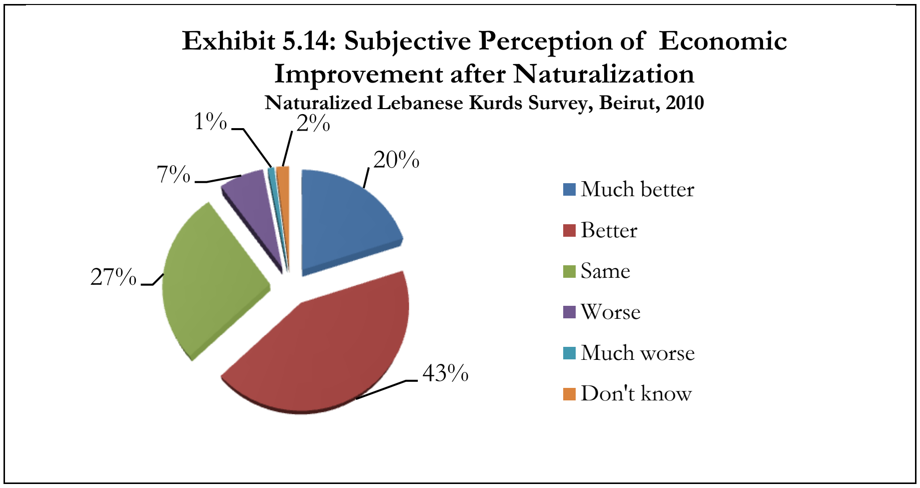
mobility by climbing the ladder toward the rungs where one finds "the people who are the best off -- those who have the most education and the most respected jobs." Exhibit 5.14 also reveals that some of the naturalized perceive their status above the 7th and 8th rung fifteen years after naturalization.

The Lebanese, Khuri wrote years ago, "conceive of class as a social category of distinct social position, not just an occupational or income group" and that "income, occupation, expenditure, education, and other related criteria, become class indices only if translated collectively into a social position, a way of life (Khuri 1969: 34). If we apply Khuri's conception, we find that our respondents' criteria (*i.e.*, education, occupation, income, and the like) do not translate collectively or individually into a distinct social category. If this is the case, then we must look around for other explanations as to why our respondents selected rungs nearer the top of the SSS ladder, where the people who have the most education and have the most respected jobs are. The answer may lie in the value of the citizenship itself, an explanation supported by Meho's work, which was carried out before the naturalization of 1994. Meho found that 37% of the Kurds of his sample who were naturalized Lebanese (prior to 1994) indicated medium social status, while 92% of those who carried *Qayd el-Dars* ID designated low as their social status, and 100% of those with neither citizenship nor *Qayd el-Dars* ID chose low as their social status (Meho 1995: 82).

We should note here that social mobility differs amongst the naturalized themselves according to their personal character and social capital.

5.1.3.2.1.8 Subjective Perception of Economic Improvement after Naturalization

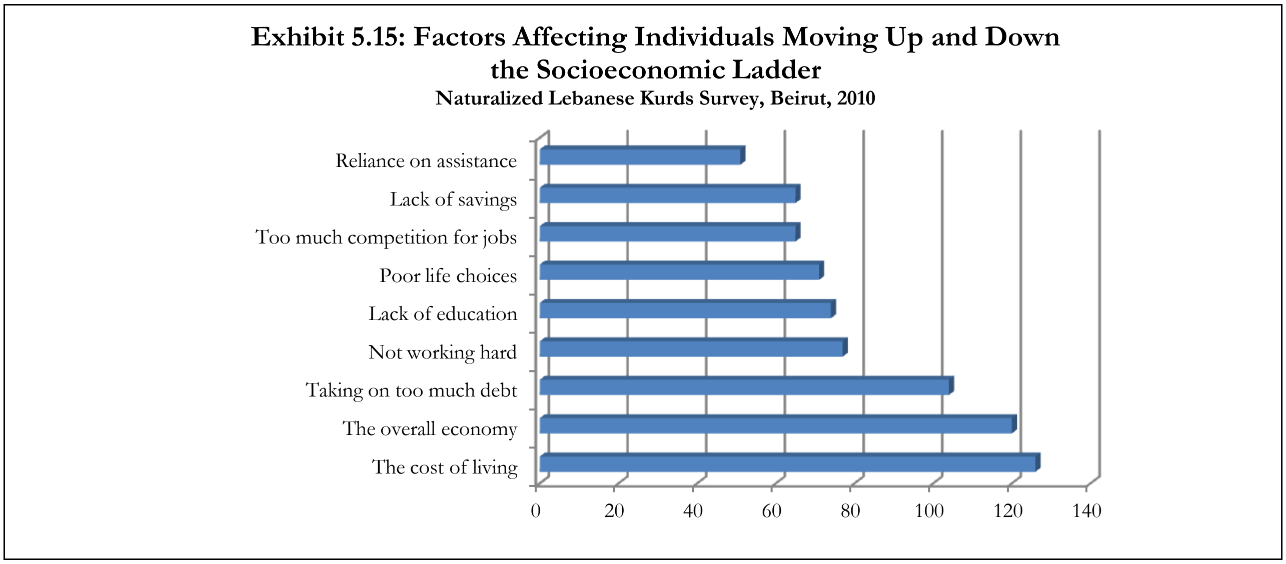
To further understand the respondents' self-evaluation of the impact of naturalization on their overall progress, we asked them whether their economic situation improved after naturalization and, if so, whether this occurred because of it. Their answers indicated that 20% see that their economic status is much better, 43% said that it is better, 27% said that their situation is the same, 7% described it as worse and 1% as much worse, while 2% did not know.



To reconcile their answers to this question with their opinions concerning their elevation on the social ladder, we must consider that their reason for indicating upward mobility may be a separate issue from their perception of their improvement of the economic situation. It could in fact be the case that the single greatest factor impinging on their perception of social mobility up the ladder is the fact that they are now citizens.

5.1.3.2.1.9 Factors Affecting Individuals Moving Up and Down the Socioeconomic Ladder

The factors affecting individual ascent and descent on the socioeconomic ladder are analyzed in the following Exhibit. The respondents identified first the cost of living, second the overall economy, thirdly indebtedness, followed by not working hard and, lastly lack of education (confirming the thesis that education is undervalued in the community).



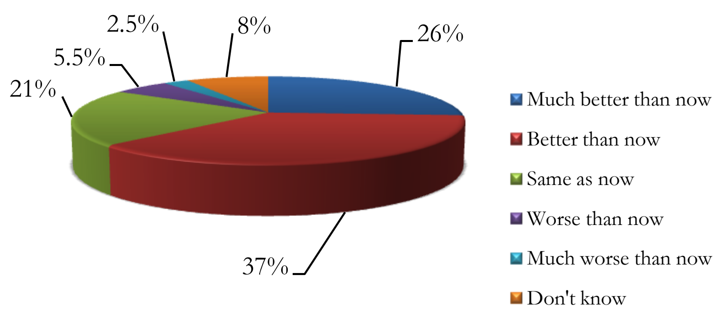
These answers articulate the respondents' vision of social mobility in terms of what factors they prioritize to explain their mobility up or downward on the social status ladder.

5.1.3.2.1.10 Children's Future Economic Status

We asked our respondents whether they thought that Lebanese children born to parents who are at the bottom of the income ladder remain at the bottom of the ladder as adults. The respondents expected significant upward mobility, anticipating that their children's future economic class status would be higher than their current status.

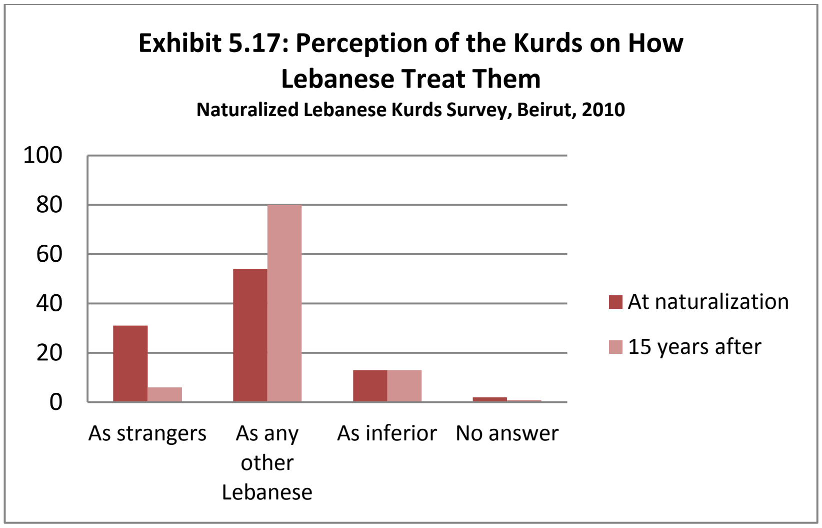
While 26% said that they expect that the future economic status of their children will be much better than their own, 37% said that they would be better, 21% said that they would be the same, 5.5% said that they would be worse, 2.5% indicated that they would be much worse, and 8% did not know.

Exhibit 5.16: Children's Future Economic Status
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



5.1.4 How Lebanese Treat Kurds Post Naturalization

In Lebanon, there exist several derogatory terms for the Kurds, some of which have become everyday proverbs and popular sayings. Prior to the Civil War for example, the term "kurdification of neighbourhoods" was used to stereotype the low-income Kurdish population settling in certain quarters of Beirut (Phares 1971 cited in Fawaz and Peillne 2003: 27).



In Meho's study, many of the surveyed Kurds reported discrimination (Meho 1995: 148-150). In our study, a third of our respondents stated that they were treated as strangers prior to their naturalization while two thirds stated that they were treated like ordinary Lebanese. Our findings reported an increase in better treatment after naturalization, which could mean that acquisition of citizenship has had positive impact on the treatment.

SECTION VI- FIELD SURVEY RESULTS: VOTING PATTERN AND POLITICAL AFILIATION

6.1 Introduction

The 1926 electoral law which was passed under the French Mandate and has since served as the basis of the modern electoral laws in Lebanon, institutionalized Lebanon's political clientelist system by mandating that parliamentary seats were to be distributed on the basis of confessional representation and geographical divisions of the governorates and the *Qazas*. All voters in each of the *Qaza* elected their parliamentary representatives through a single round of voting every four years (IFES 2009: 1-4). This system, which Harik rightly calls the "quota system", makes, in his opinion, the competition between the candidates "intra-sectarian rather than inter-sectarian" (Harik 1980: 165, 145-171).

Picard argues that "the law helped the power of the patrons and perpetuated domination by the traditional elites, for each patron acted like a feudal lord over his electoral territory" (Picard 2002: 25). Subsequently, the feudal lords were replaced by a new set of political leaders called *Zu'ama'* (plural of *Za'im*); these *Zu'ama'* act as intermediaries between their constituencies and the material resources controlled by the state or routed through its institutions (Hamzeh 2001: 172, 176). As a result, the relationship formed between the clients/constituencies and the *Zu'ama'*/political leaders becomes a "network of transactional ties, where economic and other services are distributed to the clients in exchange for political loyalty" (Hamzeh 2001: 172). This loyalty is tested during elections (Hamzeh 2001: 172) through the *Zu'ama's* political machine, the role if which is to survey the profiles and estimate numbers of the voters, to organize visits, to make promises and to offer the voters transport to ensure their arrival at the polling stations, where they will be given the electoral list (ballot papers) of the *Za'im* and his political allies and asked to cast it. (IFES 2009: 4). Since elections in Lebanon reflect the quota based nature of parliamentary representation, the patron-client

Exhibit 6.1: Lebanon's electoral system has five basic elements:

- *The right to stand is confessional:* Seats can only be contested by candidates who are from the confession that the seat has been allocated to (although there is no requirement for a candidate to prove their confessional status).
- *The right to vote is non-confessional:* Voters can vote for all available confessional seats, regardless of the voter's own confessional group.
- *Voters have more than one vote:* Lebanon uses multi-member electoral districts. Voters are able to vote for as many candidates as there are available seats. (This is known as the *bloc vote* system.)
- *Voters vote with a single ballot paper:* On a single ballot paper, a voter chooses the names of candidates they wish to vote for. A voter may choose to use only some of the votes they are entitled to.
- *It is a plurality/majority system:* Where there is only one seat for a confession, the seat is won by whichever candidate from that confession has the most votes (in effect, a *first-past-the-post* system). Where there is more than one seat for a confession, the seats are won by the candidates from that confession who have received the most votes.

Source: Lebanon's 2009 Parliamentary elections: The Lebanese Electoral System, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, IFES Lebanon Briefing Paper, March 2000, p. 2.

relationships structuring regional and national politics works through sectarian allegiances, in addition to loyalty to the persons of the political leaders (Hamzeh 2001: 171-172).

Given the fact that the electoral system encourages constituencies to view voting as a step towards economic benefit, the Kurds, who in their majority became citizens in 1994, immediately began bargaining with the politicians of Beirut regarding their patronage. Armed with citizenship in addition to their numbers, religious affiliation, and the fact the majority of Kurds are registered to vote in Beirut, the Kurds suddenly gained a weight that could not be gainsaid by the *Zu'ama'*. Although the majority of Kurds were at the bottom of the social pyramid, their power as voters gave them a bargaining chip they could use to make deals with the Beirut political leaders, who were past masters of this kind of politics.

In her thesis on clientelism among the Kurds, Kawtharani found that in the 1996 election (in which the naturalized Kurds of 1994 exercised their voting rights for the first time), Rafic Hariri, who was instrumental in naturalizing the Kurds in 1994, met with all the seven Kurdish associations to seek their votes in Beirut for his electoral bloc/coalition. Hariri, a world class businessman and founder of the Future Movement, became the most prominent chief of the Sunni community and the unchallenged leader of Beirut due in part to a very efficient political machine.

As indicated previously, the Kurds were concentrated in Beirut Districts Two and Three (see Exhibits 4.1 and 6.2). According to L. M., who is a board member of one of the Kurdish organizations in Beirut,[76] the Kurds can muster 27,000 votes in Lebanon and about 18,700 in Beirut distributed as follows:

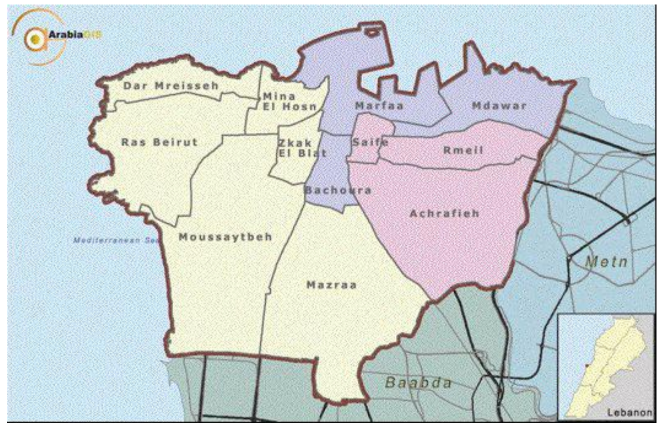
- 13,000 Electors in Zqaq Al Blat
- 10,000 Electors in Zqaq Al Blat
- 1,500 Electors in Al Marfaa Area
- 1,000 Electors in Al Bashoura
- 2,769 Electors in Al Msaitbeh
- 842 Electors in Mina Al Hosn
- 1,932 Electors in Al Mazraa

[76] Interview conducted on December 13, 2010 in his home in Bshamoun.

In his meeting with the Kurdish leaders, Hariri promised “to assign a Kurd to the position of ‘councilor in charge of Kurdish affairs’ within his institutions whose task would be to look after the particular interests and needs of the community” (Kawtharani 2003: 121). However when these associations failed to agree amongst themselves on a representative, Hariri’s political machine “offered subsidies” for each of the associations (Kawtharani 2003: 122). The failure to consolidate their ranks and act in unity has chronically plagued the Kurds and weakened their position as a group. In our discussions with various well informed and connected Kurdish figures - N. M., who heads one of the Kurdish organizations in Beirut,[77] a high level official in the *Al Mustaqbal* (the Future Movement) party S. F.,[78] and S. D. a non-Lebanese Kurd journalist[79] -- all confirmed the persisting lack of solidarity among the group, which weakens the collective bargaining power of the Kurds, while favoring the interests of select individuals. This conclusion was further echoed by R. F., who said in our interview that the Lebanese diasporic Kurds remit a great deal to Lebanon and invest in the Lebanese economy and that “if these funds were to be invested in a more systematic way, it would have created the biggest economic lobby, which could have impacted the treasury of the Lebanese government. But alas we Kurds are not organized.”[80]

Exhibit 6.2: Beirut’s 2009 Electoral Districts

The capital’s twelve administrative precincts are allocated to three different electoral districts.



Beirut District One
- Saife
- Achrafieh
- Rmeil

Beirut District Two
- Bachoura
- Marfaa
- Medawar

Beirut District Three
- Ras Beirut
- Ain El Mreisse
- Mina El Housn
- Zoukak El Blat
- Moussaytbeh
- Mazra

Source: Lebanon’s 2009 Parliamentary elections: The Lebanese Electoral System, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, IFES Lebanon Briefing Paper, March 2000, p. 2, [http://www.ifes.org/publication/56c0cdaa64aa2cad85b3f5996e37cb4c/IFES_Lebanon_ESB_Paper030209.pdf].

Despite the fact that the majority of naturalized Kurds were born in Lebanon and presumably could feel the down side of the political system in their pre-naturalized state, they could not escape from

[77] Interview conducted on November 24, 2009 in his home in Beirut.
[78] Interview conducted on August 26, 2010 in Beirut at one of the Future Movement’s offices.
[79] Interview conducted on January 9, 2010 in Beirut.
[80] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.

patron-client relationships – which are not surprising, given the prevalence of such relations in the Lebanese political landscape. Thus, to analyze their political behavior, one must recall the general clientelist pattern within Lebanon and the structures that support it (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011). Theoretically, the voting patterns of the naturalized citizens in Lebanon today "more closely resemble those of the West in the period prior to and immediately after WWI than they do those in contemporary America or Europe. This has to do with the fact that the institution of machine politics has largely been abandoned in the developed world" (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011: 188)

Bass and Casper presume a nativity gap[81] in the political participation between naturalized and native-born citizens, meaning the naturalized are less likely to vote than native-born citizens (Bass and Casper 1999: n. p.). Tuckel and Maisel have labeled this 'immigrant apathy', which began to change in the mid-1980s in the United States when naturalized voters' turnout became greater than that of the native-born (Tuckel and Maisel 1994: 410). The two also discovered that one of the factors determining immigrant voter participation was the density of immigrants in urban areas.

In their research, Bass and Casper found that "the amount of time that a naturalized citizen has spent in a county should be a predictor of voting participation because naturalized citizens, who have been naturalized longer, are generally more integrated into the society, are more absorbent to the local customs, and maybe more knowledgeable of the importance of voting as a leverage to protecting their rights and access to public resources" (Bass and Casper 1999: n. p.) This is not borne out by our findings, for we have observed that, as Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous put it, "the naturalized are not at all 'free' in their voting behavior, but are rather 'prisoners' of the one thing that should have freed them-- their citizenship. Because many believe that they owe their citizenship to one politician or other…" (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011: 192, 198). The Kurds and other naturalized citizens continue to rely heavily on political patrons and pay them back at the ballot box for favors going back to the event of naturalization. This has been the situation of the Kurds' role in the parliamentary and the municipal elections since 1996. Since then, the Kurds have failed to learn from previous shortcomings to better situate their position in the political game, which is why their position vis-a-vis the political machine and electorate mobilization process has not changed.

6.1.1 Voting in the Elections (1996-2010)

The right to vote of every registered citizen is protected by the Lebanese Constitution. The registered citizens of Lebanon directly elect the 128 members of parliament every four years. The parliament is unicameral, *i.e.* consists of a single chamber representing equally the two main religious communities in the country – the Christian and the Muslim. The seats are further sub-

[81] The nativity status concept determines whether the person is a native-born citizen or a naturalized one. For further information see Loretta E. Bass and Lynne M. Casper, Differences in registering and voting between native-born and naturalized Americans, *Population Research and Policy Review,* Volume 20, Number 6, 483-511.

divided between the eleven confessional branches of the two main religious communities. The elected parliamentarians have two main roles – legislating and electing the president of the country. The President of the country in turn appoints the Prime Minister and the cabinet on the basis of compulsory consultations with Parliament.

As stated, the electoral system is at the heart of the distribution of political power in Lebanon, and the size of the constituencies is the basis of the Lebanese electoral system. Hence having a large support among the constituencies is imperative to being elected to the parliament. As a result, the political machines of the various political leaders play a central role in convincing the electorate to vote for the leaders they represent, using various inducements, most particularly by promises for assistance.

This is the context that defines the political participation of the Lebanese citizen, including naturalized citizens. When asked whether they voted, the majority of our sample replied unambiguously that they voted in all the elections from 1996 to 2010. As seen in the Exhibit below, the participation in the parliamentary elections in 1996 was 77%, in 2000 89%, in 2005 90%, and in 2009 an extraordinary 92%.

Exhibit 6.3: Participation in the Elections
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010

	1996		**2000**		**2005**		**2009**	
Parliamentarian elections	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)
	77	23	89	11	90	10	92	8
	1998		**2004**		**2010**			
Municipal and *Mukhtar* elections	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)		
	84	16	86	14	94	6		

Their participation in the Municipal elections in 1998 was 84%, in 2004 86%, and in 2010 94%.

The numbers indicate that the participation, already large, is increasing in every election, regardless of whether it is parliamentary or municipal. The findings are congruent with reports on the participation of the naturalized in the elections in Lebanon. Akeel reported as follows: "Since 1996, the naturalized citizens' turnout in parliamentary elections has been equal to-- or higher than -- the turnout of native-born citizens." (Akeel 1997: n. p.) Since, as we have seen, research on the political participation of naturalized citizens across countries has given varying results, the question becomes, what drives this extraordinary rate of voting?

In their research on the role of the naturalized in the elections from 1996 to 2009, Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous wrote: "It can be stated with some justification here that the high voter turnout was less an expression of collective will and more the result of a lack of free will, dictated by the traditional Lebanese patron-client relationship…" (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011:199). It is not higher education or upward socioeconomic mobility *per se* that increases the naturalized citizen's likelihood of voting in Lebanon, but rather the familiarity with the political process of the country. The naturalized Kurds are innately "savvy" enough to endorse and lend their votes to the candidates who can render services to them and who can defend them.

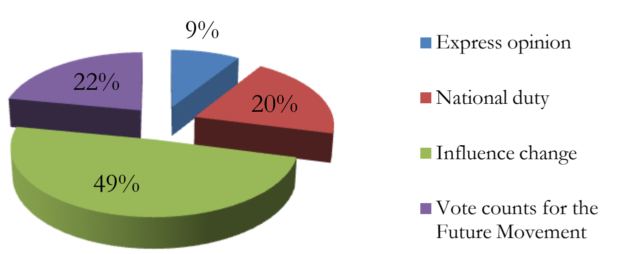
6.1.2 Reason for Voting and Voting Influence

In this section we cover reasons for voting, voting impact, and what influences the decision to vote for this candidate or list or that. The majority of our respondents believe that they vote to influence change.

In asking whether the respondents believe their votes influence the results of the elections, the answer was overwhelmingly positive: 88% of the respondents indicated that their vote had impact on the results, *versus* 12% who stated that they thought otherwise.

Of the respondents, those who said that their votes did not affect the results gave different reasons. Among the reasons given are: that mathematically, one vote would not make a difference; that money and family connections in elections overwhelm the effect of independent voting; and finally, that the Kurds are the subject of prejudice in Lebanon, which explains their unequal representation.

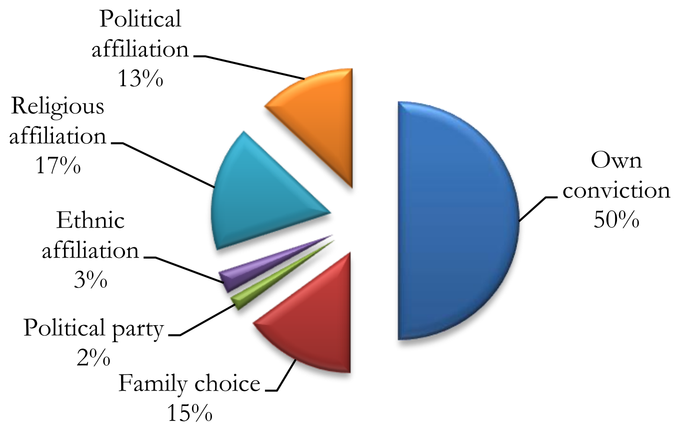
Exhibit 6.4: Why Do You Vote
Naturalized Lebanese Kurds Survey, Beirut, 2010



As for the majority who said yes, they voiced the opinion that their votes had counted for the success of the Future Movement. In addition, they affirmed that that they voted to do their national duty and to express their opinion.

When asked about who or what influences the respondents' decision to vote, 50% indicated

that they voted according to their convictions, 17% said according to religious affiliation, 13% said vote according to their political affiliation, 13% said according to family choice, 3% said following their ethnic affiliation, and 2% said they based their vote on party affiliation.



As for the influence on the naturalized Kurds, Kawtharani, in her thesis reported that the machine politics of Hariri established electoral offices in their neighborhoods a few months prior to the 2000 elections, the representatives of these offices offered goods to families and households and that on the day of the election, the electors were provided with transportation and ballot papers with the names of Rafic Hariri and his candidates. Furthermore, Hariri used his financial resources "to mobilize each and every voter in Beirut" (Kawtharani 2003: 134, 137). She also reported that the Hariri machine carefully attended to the needs of individual Kurds as well as Kurdish organizations, which later was formalized when he appointed a liaison officer for the Kurds in his welfare organization *Jami'at Beirut lil Tanmiya al Ijtima'ia* (Beirut Social Development Association) (Kawtharani 2003: 144-145). In our interview with an official of the Future Movement, S.F., we were told that Hariri had appointed several liaison officers to liaise between the Movement and the Kurdish organizations to know the voters' needs.[82]

This falls well within the Lebanese tradition, as many political figures render services to their constituents including but not limited to providing jobs, money, medicine, and welfare.[83]

All of this impinged, evidently, on the enormous disproportion between those 88% who believed that their votes influenced elections and the 12% who didn't. The sense of power was amplified because of the campaigns that the candidates or the coalitions launched through town-hall meetings and media campaigns to mold their targeted constituencies' opinions.[84]

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[82] Interview conducted in Beirut at one of the Future Movement's offices on August 26, 2010.
[83] See Johnson, M. (1986) *Class and Client in Beirut: The Sunni Muslim Community and the Lebanese State 1840-1985*. London, Ithaca Press and Cammett, M. and Issar, S. (2010) 'Bricks and Mortar Clientelism Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon', *World Politics*, 62(3): 381-421.
[84] Chris Harnisch, 2009 Lebanese Parliamentary Elections, *Critical Threats,* June 12, 2009, [http://www.criticalthreats.org/lebanon/2009-lebanese-parliamentary-elections].

To drive this argument further that the naturalized are not truly independent in their voting behavior, we refer to the findings of Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous, who established that the naturalized shifted their alliances when their patrons shifted their political position, especially following the ending of the Syrian occupation[85] and that "the naturalized merely followed the lead of their machine-based alliance, rather than establishing the ethnic clout necessary for independent politics..." (Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous 2011:200).

6.1.3 Kurds Represented in the Parliament

When asked about whether the respondents felt that, as Kurds, they were represented in the Lebanese Parliament, 8% of the respondents stated that they considered themselves represented while 92% considered that they were not, a rather remarkable result when contrasted with the overwhelming numbers who believed that their vote counted. Of those who consider themselves represented, half said that they were represented as any other Sunni and half stated that they were represented by Hariri's parliamentary bloc.

As for those who believed that they were not represented, the reasons were mainly concerned with the fact that they did not have a Kurd to represent them, which was linked to the agreed-upon sectarian composition of the country; because the Kurds are counted as Sunnis, Sunnis represent Kurds. This tends to divide the Kurdish vote, as the Kurds do not agree amongst themselves when choosing their representatives.

The Kurds almost succeeded in the 1992 elections, the first to take place after the end of the Civil War, in electing one of their own to the parliament. Wahhaj Sheikh Moussa, a rich businessman "who had invested part of his wealth in business projects that aimed at improving the socioeconomic conditions of Kurds," (Kawtharani 2003: 138) was able to collect 6000 votes despite two impediments, the first being that his candidacy took place prior to the naturalization of 1994, which meant that many Kurds did not have the right to vote, and the second being a low turnout of 20% in Beirut (Kawtharani 2003: 138). Although Moussa did not win a seat, his attempt gave the Kurds hope that in the next election they might achieve their goal of having one of their own in the parliament. They never anticipated that Hariri would co-opt them into his electoral bloc.

The municipal elections of 1996 were to give the Kurds a taste of the reality of the Beiruti milieu. According to Kawtharani, the Kurds demanded the inclusion of one of theirs on Hariri's list and Hariri seemingly acceded to their demand, only to backtrack later with the explanation

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[85] Syria occupied Lebanon from 1976 to 2005 under the pretense of stopping the Civil War. For more information about this occupation see Marius Deeb - Syria's Terrorist War on Lebanon and the Peace Process, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003 and Mordechai Nisan, The Syrian Occupation of Lebanon in *Peace with Syria: No Margin for Error* by Yoash Tsiddon-Chatto, Shawn Pine, Mordechai Nisan and Dany Shoham, ACPR Publications, 2000, pp. 49-70.

that the inclusion of a Kurdish member on his list was out of question due to the fact that the Sunni families of Beirut would not relinquish one of their seats to a Kurd. He "promised them that the next municipal elections would bear a different result, implying that a Kurdish candidate would be on his electoral list then." (Kawtharani 2003: 123)

We know from Meho's work that only 28% of the Kurds of his sample believed the Sunnis were allies and that only 39% believed that they are the most trustworthy of all the communities in Lebanon (Meho 1995: 120). These reported results indicate that the Kurds, although Sunnis themselves, have some reservations towards their Lebanese Sunni co-religionists.

These reservations are the results of unfulfilled promises (Meho 1995: 114, 146). Meho, who conducted his research immediately prior to the naturalization of 1994, wrote that "the majority of the respondents feel that the Kurds were and still are politically alienated and manipulated by many Lebanese political elites with the exception of Sami as-Sulh, Kamal Junblat, Salim al-Huss and Rafic al-Hariri". However it seems that the Kurds have changed their feelings towards Hariri after their naturalization and their role in the elections. Kawtharani reports on the treatment of the Kurds once the elections are concluded, when Hariri seemingly reneged on his promises:

> "*From the official Sunni discourse one hears in pre-election periods, one can deduce that for a limited time the ethnic boundaries of the Kurds are lifted by the dominant group, and the inclusion of Kurds is normalized for a certain period. However, when votes have already been cast, and the Za'im have ensured a place in power for the following term, the ethnic boundaries of Kurds are reinstituted again. The Kurds are no longer normal Beiruti members of the Sunni community, but outsiders whose membership is contested and whose access is rendered very difficult and tedious. The promises that were made before the elections are dropped as soon as the electoral results come out. When it is no longer election time, Kurds who go to visit the aides and allies of Hariri such as MPs and officials in the charity institutions that he sponsors the slogan: "we represent you" is no longer in effect because no resources are channeled to Kurds in the way that resources are channeled to other Sunnis*" (Kawtharani 2003: 170-171).

In our interview with S.F., a high level official in the *Al Mustaqbal*, he remarked that the Kurds have "voting weight but not political weight" because they are fragmented and have not forged a united electoral front. S. F. declared that the Future Movement deals with the Kurds as any Sunni group or party such as the Muslim Brotherhood or the *Tawhid* Movement, and not as an 'ethnic' group. The Movement would like to see them become "*Lebanonized*" and less 'ethnicized', since in the Movement's view they are firstly Sunnis and Lebanese. He confided that "the Future Movement cannot afford to begin slicing the Sunni quota in the parliament and to create sub-Sunni ethnic groups."[86] In his book *Minorities in the Middle East*, Nisan sums up the

[86] Interview conducted in Beirut at one of the Future Movement's offices on August 26, 2010.

reality of the Kurds in the Middle Eastern countries as follows "… 'A Kurd who lives in an Arab country becomes an Arab' may be an enticing prescription for equality and integration, but it also threatens to eliminate smaller cultural communities by fully enveloping and suffocating them in the Arab fold" (Nisan2002: 24). In other words, the Kurds are called on to suppress their ethnicity when it comes to their political demands for representation. While some might consider the push to assimilate the Kurds as a positive and inclusive step, others might see it as a familiar theme of the modernizing state, first put into practice by Kemalist Turkey. R. F. explains in his interview that "Kurdish representation within the Sunni quota is related to the fact that we are not a sect like the Armenians among the Christians. In addition, there is no consideration given to being of Kurdish nationalism or to our ethnicity." He added that "when we demand a parliamentary or municipal seat, the response is: Excuse us! You want us to give you a Sunni seat? The Kurds answer, we are Sunnite also. Are they not Sunnite when the Kurdish families elect Sunni representatives?" [87] This illustrates the divide between a larger, rooted sectarian interest group and a smaller ethnic interest group that defines itself outside sectarian boundaries. This also shows how, in the absence of a robust secular sector and the presence of a thriving clientelist system in Lebanon, the Kurdish community is caught between the mechanisms of a clientelist public sector and the political machinery of Sunni exclusion.

Our interview with R. F. well describes the discourse between the Kurdish community in Lebanon and President Massoud Barzani of Iraqi Kurdistan region on his state visit to Lebanon in 2010. When some of the Kurdish leaders asked President Barzani to assist the Kurds in Lebanon, his answer was that he would only assist them according to what the laws of Lebanon allow, relayed R. F. The community "was very disappointed and responded to Barzani by saying that the circumstances of the Kurds of Lebanon will not be adjusted unless they establish their own social institutions, otherwise they will continue to follow the Future Movement, Hezbollah, Amal, the Ahbash, and the Muslim Brotherhood. They relayed to him that they don't want this to continue and that all they are asking is to have independence as a sect within the framework of the Lebanese system."[88] R. F. concluded that "the Kurds are not united and as such the political parties and organizations play out these contradictions." [89] A similar lamentation was voiced by N. M., who said that "the politicians of Beirut have been unjust to the Kurds" and that "if it was not for the Kurds they would not have seen the parliament or the ministry."[90]

In our fieldwork we detected that some of the Kurds are succumbing to the pressure exerted on them to shed their ethnicity and adopt the dominant Sunni Arab identity, to some extent as a survival mechanism in the face of exclusion, and to some extent because, within the existing political practices in the country, they are in need of a patron. Some do assert their Kurdishness,

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[87] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.
[88] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.
[89] Interview conducted on March 27, 2010 in Beirut.
[90] Interviewed conducted on December 13, 2009 in Beirut.

empowered by educational attainment, migration, and socioeconomic mobility. Others, mostly *Merdalli-Muhallami*, are buying into two newly invented legends: The first is that the *Merdalli-Muhallami* people "come from the Prophet's ancestry, *i.e.*, they are 'Seyyit'" (Sari 2010: 50) and the second is that they are descendants of *Bani Hilal* and as such they are Arabs in their identity. This legend is spreading fast with the use of social media and Internet. When asked about the truth behind this claim, Dr. Shabo Talay said that historically speaking the *Bani Hilal* did not reach that part of the world, and that the book which is asserting this legend is neither scientifically sound nor academically reliable.[91] Although there is a rich corpus on the ethnic Kurds, there is practically nothing written on the *Merdalli-Muhallami* group, who are in the throes of an identity crises.[92] Dr. Talay confirmed that there is a great vacuum in the body of knowledge about this linguistic group, which is being filled by legends and myth. The *Merdalli-Muhallami* group in Lebanon, which is lumped in with the Kurds and shares their low status, is disassociating itself from the "Kurdish" appellation and connotation by seeking difference, *i.e.* looking to their Arab roots to eradicate the Kurdish stigma that marks them in Lebanon.

We have also observed in our fieldwork that the Kurds possess layers of identities, which is not unusual in the multicultural, multiethnic, and multi-religious environment of Lebanon. Their identifications with the state, with dominant ethnic or religious groups for example, are articulated differently in different contexts. The subjects of our survey would state that they are Kurds when it came to political rights and representation in the government (comparing themselves to the Armenians), but emphasizing, in other contexts, their sectarian allegiance to the Muslim Sunni denomination; yet when they are faced with discrimination from Lebanese people, they shed their Kurdishness and claim their Lebaneseness. We have also detected that the *Merdallis*, who are a sub-group of the Kurds of Lebanon, distance themselves from the Kurdish community when it comes to being Arab or when they feel that being a Kurd lowers their social status, yet they don't scruple to affirm their Kurdishness if it is a question of a special allocation of resources earmarked for Kurds. Many people, particularly in the Middle East, have overlapping identities and depending on the situation they "emphasize or de-emphasize" one of these identities (van Bruinessen 1992: 47). In her work, Nagata explains that there are three reasons why one would select one particular identity over another in constructing what she terms situational identity: "(1) the desire to express either social distance or solidarity; (2) expediency, or the immediate advantages to be gained by a particular reference group selection on a particular occasion; and (3) consideration of social status and upward or downward social mobility" (Nagata 1974: 340). What this tells us is that "some individuals will always be moving in the direction of the dominant culture" and that this is "viewed less as a changing of status than as a shedding of ethnicity." (Nagata 1974: 332)

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91 Telephone interview, March 3, 2011. The book (written in Arabic) is by Hasan Ismaeil and Abdel Qader Othman and is titled *al Muhallamiyat: Arab Identity and Genealogical Roots,* Dar el Mallah for Publication and Distribution, 2004.

92 Interview by telephone on September 17, 2010, Beirut, Lebanon with I. O. a Lebanese *Merdalli/Muhallami*.

In this environment of continuous inclusion and exclusion (self-inflicted or other-inflicted), the Kurds as well as the political powers in Beirut negotiate and manipulate their identities depending on the context of the moment.

6.1.4 Political Party Association

We asked our respondents whether they considered themselves members of any particular political party in Lebanon, be it Lebanese or Kurdish. One would expect that citizens who are highly mobilized to vote to be party partisans, but the response was a bit perplexing. Only 12% were members of a Kurdish political party at naturalization and 8% were members in 2010. As for non-Kurdish political parties, only 8% were members at naturalization *versus* 9% 15 years after. Normally, such numbers would indicate political apathy. Sociologically, the divergence between voting patterns and party membership is a problem.

The Kurds founded several political and socio-culture organizations, among which are: the Cedars' Sports and Cultural Club, the Lebanese Social Association, the Kurdish Cultural and Humanitarian League in Lebanon, the Kurdish Lebanese Charity Association, the *Jil al Mustaqbal*, The *Merdalli* Lebanese Association for Arts, the Association of the *Rawdah* Mosque, The Lebanese Kurdish Mountain Folklore Group, and The Lebanese Kurdish Association for Social Services. There are also a few family associations such as the Omari and the Omayrat, and village associations such as the Social League of the People of Ma'sirty. Kurdish activists have also founded political parties such as the Kurdish Democratic Party of Lebanon, known as the "Parti", which operated as the Lebanese affiliate of the PDK party of Mustafa Barazani of Northern Iraq and the Kurdish Lebanese *Razgari* party. We found however, that most of these organizations and political parties, except for the family associations, had few registered members, and those were mostly kin. We also found that these organizations were managed as family enterprises rather than institutions and mirror the social structures of other Lebanese parties.

Although the majority of our respondents said that they are not members of any political party, their affiliation with the *Ahbash*[93] or the Future Movement is common knowledge. In our interview with S. F., he admitted that the Kurds are divided in terms of their political affiliation

[93] The Association of Islamic Charitable Projects (*Jami'at al-Mashari' al-Khayriya al-Islamiya*), known as *Al-Ahbash* ("the Ethiopians"), is a pan-Sufi politically active organization in Lebanon whose members are devout followers of Shaykh Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Yusuf al-Hirari al-Shibi al- Abdari, also known as al-Habashi due to his Ethiopian origins, hence the appellations given to his movement. Their "belief system blends elements of Sunni and Shi'i theology with Sufi spiritualism. The outcome of this doctrinal eclecticism is an ideology of Islamic moderation and toleration that emphasizes Islam's innate pluralism, along with opposition to political activism and the use of violence against the ruling order" as opposed to " the conventional 'Islamist' or 'fundamentalist' mold" (Hamzeh and Dekmejian 1996: 219-220). See and A. Nizar Hamzeh and R. Hrair Dekmejian, A Sufi Response to Political Islamism: Al-Ahbash of Lebanon, the International Journal of Middle East Studies Vol. 28, No. 2, May 1996, pp. 217-229 and A. Nizar Hamzeh, Islamism in Lebanon: A Guide to the Groups, *The Middle East Quarterly,* Volume IV, No. 3, September 1997, pp. 47-53.

between two parties. In his estimation, around 10% of the Kurds are with *Al Ahbash*, and the remaining 90% are with the Future Movement. Accordingly, we can draw the conclusion that the majority of the Kurds we have surveyed are not members of the Future Movement but rather supporters of this Movement.

SECTION VII- DISCUSSION

7.1 General Discussion

This study investigated the impact of naturalization on many dimensions of the social life of the naturalized, highlighting socioeconomic mobility and political participation. We were interested mostly in the effect of this fifteen year interval on the life of the individuals involved, hence our emphasis on intragenerational Subjective Social Status (SSS). The basic premise is that the relationship between acquisition of citizenship/naturalization and social mobility should result in upward mobility of some sort, given that naturalization itself is features as an upward movement.

Socioeconomic data collected in the twentieth century has long pointed to the fact that socioeconomic status, whether measured by education, or occupation, or income, is an index of political participation, with those having more status tending to be more politically active. However, the high rate of voter participation among the Kurds, the subject of our study, seemingly defies this rule, as the group is not collectively a high status group; rather, the relation between naturalization and voting, here, reflects a patron-client relationship forged within the realm of the clientelist and sectarian system of Lebanon.

This study, which was conducted 15 years after the naturalization of the Kurds in Lebanon in 1994, provides a basis for understanding several aspects of this community, including ethnic formation, social status, employment, political culture, the social and economic opportunities open to their children, and the like. This study gathered new data from a statistical sample probing the socioeconomic implications of naturalization on *intragenerational* mobility, with results that challenge certain mainstream assumptions about the sociology of naturalization and of political activism. It also affirms the continuing relevance of the theme articulated in Meho's thesis on the Kurds, although this was produced prior to the 1994 naturalization. According to Meho, the Kurds' "status as an unnaturalized minority has denied many members of the community legitimate access to secure and stable forms of employment and other civic privileges. Among other things, naturalization would have lessened the degree of discrimination they had to face and would have enhanced their opportunities for upward mobility." (Meho 1995: 143)

In reading the results of the study we are encouraged, if not required, to consider a different conceptualization of the social class of the naturalized which is distinct from the one perceived by the native citizen, for one of the great upward events in the life of the naturalized citizen is the acquisition of citizenship itself.

Social mobility is not only dependent upon societal influences or constraints (e.g. inequality, economic stagnation, unemployment, discrimination, conflicts, financial crisis, and the like), but also upon personal factors (e.g. social capital, skills, education, work value, the like). We should note that

social mobility of different naturalized persons varies widely according to their inherent characters, ethnicity and culture, as well as their geographical locations. Furthermore, changes in the skills required in an economy that has devalued certain skills and inflated the value of knowledge-based work may also affect the rate of social mobility, re-constituting the economic ladder by which the immigrant was traditionally able to rise, through factory jobs or semi-skilled labor, into the middle class.

An interesting finding of this study is the irony found in the answers of the respondent Kurds concerning their parliamentary voting participation and their alienation from Parliament. High rates of turnout in the parliamentary elections since their naturalization do not reflect traditional high rates of activism in, for instance, parties. What is also interesting is that despite the fact that Kurds, as Sunnis, support Sunni candidates in elections and are loyal to Sunni politicians, their perception of how their Sunni co-religionists treat them gives the impression of an abusive relationship: Kurds give votes, but in return continue to suffer discrimination. We found that the policy of inviting the Kurds to shed their "Kurdishness" and become more Sunni, more Arab, and more Lebanese may assume the guise of openness, but in reality it confronts the Kurds with a familiar choice: assimilate or be quiet. It is a choice Kurds have faced since the break-up of the Ottoman Empire.

Since the non-naturalized Kurds took positions at the bottom tier of the social structure by working in low-class jobs or by achieving modest upward mobility through participation in the informal or the small-business sector, it is to be expected that second and subsequent- generation immigrants will achieve upward social mobility and reach professional occupations through the acquisition of higher education and marketable skills and qualifications, the acquisition of social capital, and the fostering of the education of their children of both sexes. Yet cross-cultural data show a surprising reluctance of Kurds to pursue educational opportunity. Further study must be made to determine if this is true for Kurdish families in Lebanon today.

This study with all its limitations has been a first attempt at examining this matter in Lebanon; as such the study may generate more questions than answers. However results of this report should encourage researchers interested in improving immigrants' lives to consider furthering this research by conducting longitudinal studies.

Our findings demonstrated that understanding the causal relationship between naturalization and subjective social status among the naturalized necessitates an examination not only of their income, or occupation, but also of other dimensions of social well-being such as education, housing ownership, banking, self-identification of social class, and the like. Future research using longitudinal studies, for example, may help determine whether the relationship between the acquisition of citizenship/naturalization and socioeconomic mobility changes affect not only the naturalized generation, but also the offspring of the naturalized.

7.2 Limitations of the Study

The great limitation of this study lies in the relatively small sample of this population that we were able to contact. Although it was beyond the scope of this study, investigators conducting similar studies should consider extending the study to all the naturalized populations, which include groups such as the Bedouins, Arab Wadi Khaled, the Armenians, Palestinians of the Seven Villages, and the Syriacs. Samples including different immigrant generations would allow exploration of how intergenerational mobility operates to enhance or negate socioeconomic mobility as they become more integrated into their local labor markets and communities, and how this may vary for different ethnic and religious groups.

Additionally, future studies should include social capital in the survey as another factor affecting *intragenerational* and *intergenerational* mobility. While social capital may increase with the acculturation of the naturalized, acculturation itself is a construct that remains difficult to capture in surveys.

Another limitation derives from the questions being perhaps conceptually obscure to some participants, due to the technical wording in Arabic, as well as the level of education of the respondents. Another limitation was our inability to compensate the respondents for their time. Researchers who are interested in further pursuing this line of studies in a similar environment with comparable groups need to simplify the questionnaire and if possible compensate the respondents for their time and loss of income, for the group surveyed, being mostly working class, do not enjoy significant leisure time, and must sacrifice to some extent in order to answer the questionnaire and to be interviewed. We believe that we would have had more relaxed interviews had we compensated the interviewees for their time. Another limitation is the lack of cooperation of the respondents due either to a combination of lack of experience in being surveyed, lack of trust due to their experience in Lebanon as citizenless persons (and the rumored threat of de-naturalization that hangs over their heads), and the general tension in Beirut between the Shiite and Sunnites. We could have used political leverage to have better reception and more cooperation from the community; however we did not opt for this because we wanted to experience the community as it is and to give the respondents the opportunity to answer any and all of the questions freely and without any constraints.

In addition to the above, there are also limitations of the indicators of social position in regard to naturalization that we used here. First, the accuracy of reports about Subjective Social Status is likely to be blurry, given that the naturalization had occurred fifteen years before. Further empirical clarification would be useful, as would an assessment of whether the respondents consider different contexts when they report about social status.

7.3 Future Directions

Through policy interventions and structural changes in the economy and society, some countries ensure that people in general and people at the bottom of the social ladder in particular have the opportunity to experience upward social mobility. In Lebanon little effort is made to introduce such policies. This is due to the fact that the public sector itself is notoriously large and clientelist. Citizens are left on their own to do what they can for themselves and their families. Hence the pattern of social mobility that one observes in the Lebanese society is very dependent on the role of family and kinship group, which are the key actors in securing upward mobility for their offspring.

Changes must occur at different levels in order to assist those at the bottom end of the social ladder to climb upward.

In Lebanon the government must be called on to generate an integration policy for the naturalized, and to focus on creating the right opportunities for the weakest members of society to upgrade their status by increasing access to economic opportunities and facilitating opportunities for advancement that traverse geographic and ethnic boundaries. Both government and philanthropic help to improve access to public and private institutions of higher education would greatly improve the condition and status of minorities. In spite of sectarian conflict, emigration, and invasion by neighboring states, Lebanon has a very resilient entrepreneurial culture that creates opportunities for individuals who, if they have aspiration, talents, and energy, may advance up the ladder even if they are poor or working class. They should be assisted through merit-based grants, as well as programs that improve community services.

As for the Lebanese Kurds, the community lacks an endogenous appreciation of education. Community leaders should emphasize investment in their children's education and must make the community understand that education is not a luxury in today's world, but a necessity. Education is evidently one of the great instruments for upward socioeconomic mobility. Kurdish community groups must work on persuading their members to alter certain social attitudes. In particular, Kurds need to alter patriarchal attitudes towards women's education and work and to expand the horizons within which they envision the future of their children. Community groups could also encourage less isolation; social networks need to be developed to allow individuals more access to domains outside the realm of immediate family and friends, and community members should not fear that association with people with different backgrounds will mean the disappearance of their own cultural uniqueness.

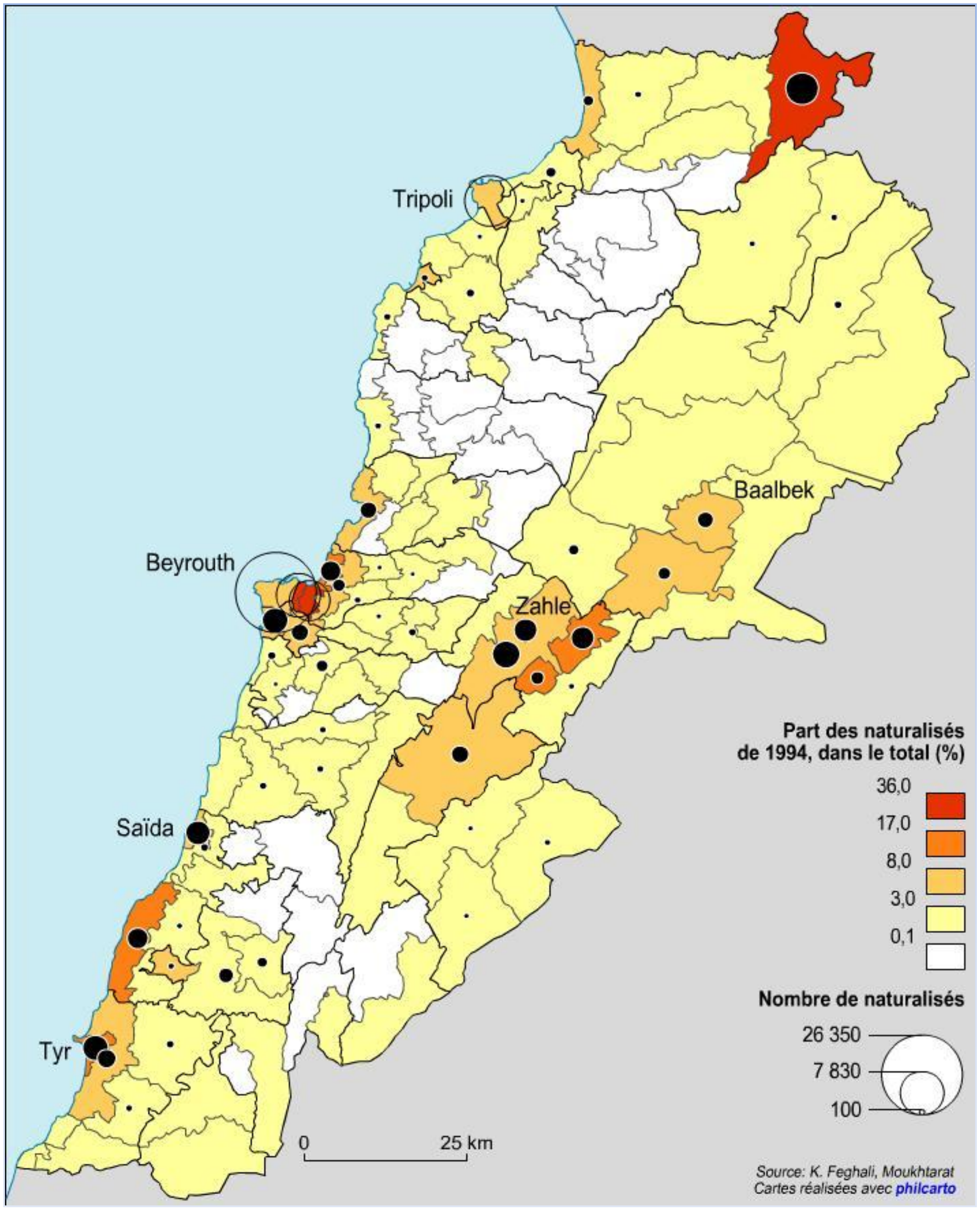
As for scientific research and policy proposals, there is an urgent need for social status studies in Lebanon and for the devising of a new typology of social stratification. One indication of the delayed state of sociology in Lebanon is that the last of such studies was conducted before the Civil

War of 1975. Similarly, there is a need for academics and practitioners to construct a social thematic that articulates contemporary problems in a multi-ethnic and multi-sectarian Middle Eastern country, and to propose implementable policies, especially as recent events have shown that the current of Middle Eastern history is far from 'frozen'.

Finally, there is a need for more in-depth research in the area of social mobility among the naturalized in particular to better understand the impact of naturalization on their lives and their integration and participation in the Lebanese society.

SECTION VIII- APPENDICIES

Appendix I: Map Showing Geographical Concentration of the Naturalized



Appendix II: MACARTHUR'S SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL STATUS (SSS) LADDER

Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in Lebanon. At the top of the ladder are the people who are the best off -- those who have the most education and the most respected jobs. At the bottom are the people who are the worst off -- who have the least money, least education, and the least respected jobs or no jobs. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top, the lower you are the closer you are to the people at the bottom.



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